

WHEN
VICTORIA
BEGAN TO
REIGN





THE PATRIOTIC DECLARATION
QUEEN VICTORIA,
 The 20th June 1837

1. Jigsaw Puzzle of Queen Victoria at her Accession

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WHEN
VICTORIA
BEGAN TO REIGN
*A Coronation Year
Scrapbook
made by*

Margaret
Lambert



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INTRODUCTION



This book is only intended to be a scrapbook of what people were doing, saying and thinking, a hundred years ago, when Queen Victoria came to the throne. It does not give anything like a complete picture of the times, but is modelled on the old scrapbooks and albums in which people pasted whatever took their fancy, from the latest engravings of the young Queen to the curate's Valentine. We begin, like so many old scrapbooks, with portraits of the Royal Family, the late King and the young Queen Victoria. We end with the Coronation which took place a year after the Queen's Accession. In between is what, in those days, would have been termed a miscellany.

What people actually saw and felt is perhaps made clearer in the pictures than in the text, although for both I have, as far as possible made use of contemporary materials. Everyday things, so familiar as to be scarcely noticed, are represented by the various trades-

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men's cards, the shopfronts, and the writing materials. Tea and coffee wrappers are decorated with a popular song which has no relation to either beverage, for in those days illustrated advertisements were considered vulgar.

The Reform Cup, presented to Lord Grey by penny subscription, gives an idea of what people expected from the Bill. The oakleaves of the British constitution blossom into the bible, the cap of liberty and other symbols of the new age which is to follow on the abolition of rotten boroughs.

Equally typical of the times is the kitchen of the Reform Club, then just founded, and where Soyer was to make culinary history. It represents the very latest kitchen equipment.

Of the improving literature, pamphlets on the evils of drunkenness were very common, and give us a glimpse of the misery which made the gin palaces so resplendent a feature of the London slums. Moral sentiments of a different form are concealed beneath pictures of toilet objects, to save young ladies from the sin of vanity.

Children's books are full of morality; but the age must have been fond of children, for all its callousness to those at work, for the books are delightful. Heroes are nearly all military; the attempt to popularise the lives of self-made men had only just begun.

Women, except working women, spent so much time at home that ornamental handiwork of all kinds formed their staple occupation. 'No lady can consider her education complete until she has produced at least one picture worthy to be framed and glazed,' wrote the *Lady's Magazine*. But the machine age began to en-

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croach even on these prerogatives, when Messrs. Stevens produced little silk embroidered pictures on Coventry ribbon. It is fitting that these foretastes of the March of Steam should represent an old stage coach and a new railway engine.

The taste of the times is illustrated by the flowers then fashionable. They are 'Florists' flowers, specially cultivated to produce stripes and dots and speckles, as regularly and as formally as possible. Flower-fancying was a great hobby even amongst the working classes; gold and silver laced polyanthus, so evenly marked that they might be machine made, were special favourites round Macclesfield and Manchester; their names 'Bang Europe', 'Eckersley's Jolly Dragoon' and 'Prince Regent' are as typical of their times as some of the old inn signs. 'Miss Fanny Kemble' makes a charming tulip. Exhibition pinks were grown all over the country, but Paisley was their great stronghold.

Flower-fancying in the heart of manufacturing England shows how little, at this time, the smoke of factories had polluted the air, though London fogs frequently feature in the news. But though the air might be cleaner than today, human habitations certainly were not. We need to contrast the splendours of the London season with filthy streets and slums with open sewers; the magnificence of Royal pageantry with the twenty-six cesspools found under Windsor Castle when it was being renovated for Queen Victoria.

London was very much noisier and dirtier than today, with its cobbled streets, creaking carts and rat-infested rookeries, whence in hot weather malignant fevers were apt to spread to more respectable parts of the town. The little crossing-sweeper, beloved of Vic-

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torian novelists, must have had his work cut out sweeping a passage and escorting timorous pedestrians through the traffic. The town was engulfing the surrounding country at an alarming rate, just as it is today. It had, however, pleasant features which have gone. Its buildings, though they might be Gothic, were still designed to be Picturesque, rather than moral, as they afterwards became. A tremendous battle of the styles was raging round the new Houses of Parliament, in which Gothic ultimately won, a victory to which we owe, besides freak manifestations such as the Albert Memorial, our miles and miles of dreary suburbs. Dotted all over London were little amusement gardens, miniature replicas of Vauxhall and Cremorne. Public houses were not faintly disreputable, as they have since become: they were centres of a sort of club life for the middle-classes; a favourite amusement of an evening was glee-singing.

For some people life a hundred years ago was remarkably pleasant, much more so than today. But for the great majority we can safely say that it was not.

Although this book has no pretensions to be a serious study, I have to thank a great many friends for help in compiling it.

For the Accession, Mrs. Frances Du Puy Fletcher has very generously allowed me to use excerpts from the unpublished letters of Mary Berry in her possession, and which are shortly to appear in volume form. I have to thank Miss B. F. Cresswell of Exeter for the account of the Coronation as seen from the street; she is the niece to whom the story was told. I am also indebted to Lord Bathurst for permission to use the letter on a railway accident of 1837, to Mr. C. Kinnemouthe for the one

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describing a voyage to America, to Mr. Giles Puller and Major Jervis for some other letters used, and to Mr. Tapley Soper of the Exeter City Library for the excerpts from Lady Paterson's diary.

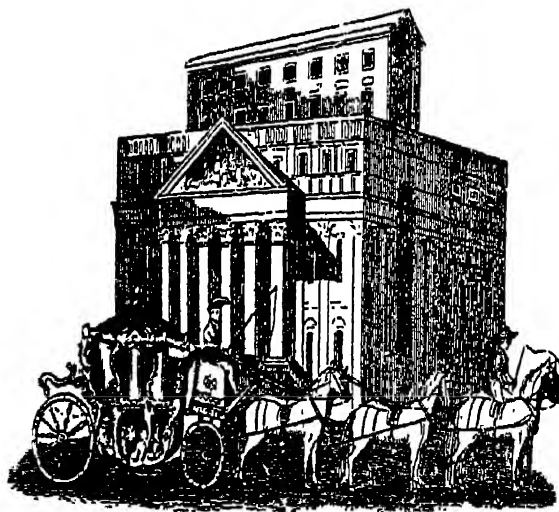
For collecting and arranging the illustrations I have to thank Miss Enid Marx. Dr. John Johnson, Printer to the University of Oxford, has not only allowed us to draw freely on his collection but has spent many hours helping us choose and arrange the material. Mrs. Nicholl of Dunsford has lent us a great many things from her collection which we could not have hoped to find elsewhere. Mr. Gerald Forsyth has allowed us to reproduce his spangled prints of a harlequinade with the great Grimaldi himself, and a Columbine. Miss Cresswell very kindly lent us a doll's quilt of Coventry ribbon made for the Coronation, Miss Ursula Radford a set of miniature books including souvenirs of the Coronation, Miss Andrew several contemporary books, whilst Mr. Tapley Soper of the Exeter City Library has allowed us to reproduce illustrations from children's books in the Library, and Mr. A. K. Sabin of the Bethnal Green Museum has allowed us to use the pedlar doll and doll's booth in the Museum.

A great many people have helped me with advice and special information on the period. I should particularly like to thank Mr. Gerald Morice of the Model Theatre Guild and Dr. E. Reynolds for information on all kinds of amusements then in vogue. Miss Mary Coate, Miss Muriel Barron, Miss Puller, Mr. Jason Hill, and Mr. A. K. Sabin have all helped me with their extensive knowledge of the period.

Finally I have to thank a band of devoted friends, Miss Francesca Allinson, Miss Maisie Johnston, Miss

* INTRODUCTION *

K. B. Outhwaite, Miss Alice Ritchie and Mrs. Tomrley for helping me to wade through the masses of available materials.



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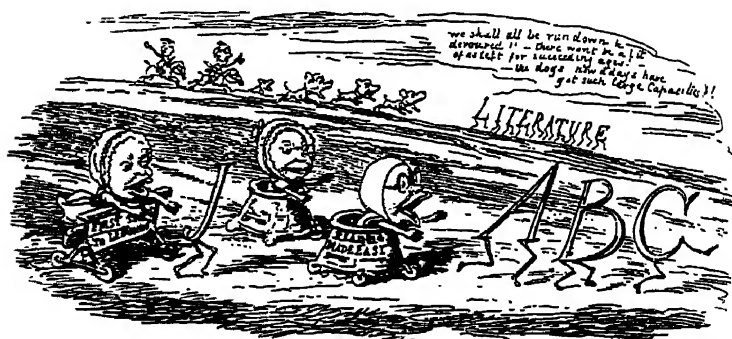
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"The Pursuit of Letters" —



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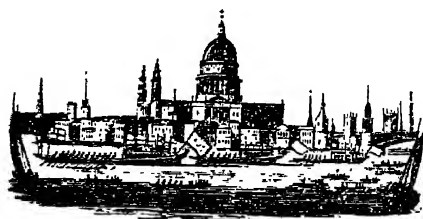
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I. ACCESSION



PROLOGUE

The contrast between Court life in 1837, at the death of William IV, and fifty years later when Queen Victoria celebrated her golden jubilee, has often been commented upon. But it is equally illuminating to reverse the process and go back some fifty years. Here is a description of life in Court circles written in 1788 when George III, whose dull domesticity was a byword amongst his subjects, was King:

'The Prince of Wales very much affronted the Duke of Orleans and his natural Brother, L'Abbé de la Fai, at Newmarket, L'Abbé declaring it possible to charm a Fish out of the Water, which being disputed occasioned the laying of a Bett; the Abbé stooped down over the water to tickle the Fish with a little switch. Fearing however the Prince sd. do him some trick, he declared he hoped the P. would not use him unfairly, by throwing him into the water. The P. answered him that he wd.

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not, upon his honour. The Abbé had no sooner begun the operation by leaning over a little Bridge, when the P. took hold of his heels and threw him into the water which was rather deep. The Abbé, much enraged, the moment he got himself out run at the P. with g. violence, a Horsewhip in his Hand, saying he thought very meanly of a P. who could not keep his word. The P. flew from him, and getting to the Inn, locked himself in one of the rooms. . . .’

‘Prince of Wales, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Duke and Dutches of Cumberland, and Miss Piggott, Mrs. F’s companion, went a Party to Windsor, during the absence of *The Family* from Windsor; and going to see a cold Bath, Miss P. expressed a great wish to bathe this hot weather. The D. of C. very imprudently pushed her in, and the Dut. of C. having the presence of mind to throw out the Rope saved her when in such a disagreeable State from fear and surprise as to be near sinking. Mrs. F. went into convulsion fits and the Dut. fainted away, and the scene proved ridiculous in the extreme, as Report says the Duke called out to Miss P. that he was instantly coming to her in the water and continued undressing himself. Poor Miss P’s clothes entirely laid upon the water and made her appear an awkward figure. They afterwards pushed in one of the Prince’s attendants.’

Whilst the Prince of Wales was thus amusing himself, his younger brother, the future William IV, was visiting Cheltenham with his parents, and admiring the celebrated Mrs. Jordan. Being at some distance from the succession, he attracted little attention. His service in the Navy, of which his abrupt manners were a constant reminder, gave him a certain popularity as a ‘Sailor

Prince' or 'Young Royal Tarry Breeks', as Burns preferred to call him. With his superiors he was less in favour, owing to an incorrigible habit of disobeying orders when the fancy took him, and this cut his naval career short. He was, however, able to form a lifelong friendship with Nelson.

Charles Greville, who knew him well, writing after his death thus summed up his early career:

'King William IV, if he had been born in a private station, would have passed unobserved through life like millions of other men, looked upon as possessing a good-natured and affectionate disposition, but without either elevation of mind or brightness of intellect. During many years of his life the Duke of Clarence was an obscure individual, without consideration, moving in a limited circle, and altogether forgotten by the great world. He resided at Bushey with Mrs. Jordan, and brought up his numerous children with tender affection: and with them, and for them, he seemed entirely to live. The cause of his separation from Mrs. Jordan has not been explained, but it probably arose from his desire to better his condition by a good marriage, and he wanted to marry Miss Wykeham, a half-crazy woman of large fortune, on whom he afterwards conferred a Peerage. George IV, I believe, put a spoke in that wheel, fortunately for the Duke as well as for the country. The death of the Princess Charlotte opened to him a new prospect, and lack of royal progeny made his marriage as desirable an event to the public as it was convenient to himself. . . .'

Mrs. Jordan, with whom the Duke of Clarence lived in disreputable obscurity for some twenty years, was an extremely popular actress. Indeed, her success was such

that it is said to have roused the jealousy of Mrs. Siddons and the Kemble coterie, who made themselves so disagreeable to Mrs. Jordan that Sheridan, in order to keep her in his company, was obliged to offer her £30 a week, in those days an enormous salary. The Duke of Clarence, on a visit to Cheltenham with his Royal parents in 1788, was so impressed by her performance that he was instrumental in having her presented with 'a very elegant gold medal, accompanied by a written document, so truly gratifying to her feelings as to confer a tenfold value on the token by which it was accompanied'.

A memorial biography of the 'Glorious Monarch of Reform' tells us that: 'On resuming her engagement in London, it was the adverse fate of Mrs. Jordan to arrest the attention of the Duke of Clarence, who became particularly fascinated by her personification of *Little Pickle* in *The Spoilt Child*. The exquisite symmetry of Mrs. Jordan's form in male attire, and more particularly her unmatched talents in delineating the character of *Little Pickle*, combined to subdue the affections of the personage in question, and in consequence overtures were made, when the lady, with that delicacy of feeling so invariably characteristic of her feelings, rejected the offer, situated as she still was with Mr. Ford. Thus matters for a time continued, the lover's importunities increasing, while pecuniary offers were tendered in the way of a settlement, to the amount of one thousand pounds per annum, which ultimately led Mrs. Jordan to conceive that it became a bounden duty, on account of her offspring, to reflect seriously on the subject. The outcome of this painful scrutiny was a proposal on the part of Mrs. Jordan, that as she had so many years co-

habited with and borne him (Mr. Ford) a family of children; in consideration also of her having been uniformly introduced into society as his wife, she considered herself justly entitled to his hand, and in consequence she stipulated that Mr. Ford should at once name a day to ratify the promise so incessantly made, or in the event of refusal, she conceived herself at liberty to act as the dictates of prudence should prescribe. Mr. Ford, however, thought fit to evade the question, when she conceived herself at liberty to embrace the protection offered by the Duke of Clarence, as in that case, she conceived ample means would be placed at her disposal to provide for her offspring, in whose behalf no legal plea on Mr. Ford could be set forth.'

These developments inevitably caused public comment, especially as Mrs. Jordan did not give up the stage. However, she and the Duke settled down to a life of quiet domesticity, producing a family of ten children, five boys and five girls.

A description in the press of a birthday party given by the Duke and Mrs. Jordan at Bushey roused Cobbett to indignant protest in his *Political Register*. The account stated that the Prince of Wales had attended, with four of his brothers, the Lord Chancellor, and various members of the aristocracy and their wives; that the Prince had led in Mrs. Jordan to the head of the table; that the Duke's 'numerous family were introduced and admired', including 'an infant in arms with a most beautiful white head of hair'; whilst the Duke of Kent's band had played extracts from Haydn's *Creation*. This last item Cobbett characterised as blasphemous, and he demanded a denial of the whole story, which was not forthcoming.

Less severe moralists than Cobbett, however, felt a

certain sympathy with the Duke, debarred as he was by Act of Parliament from making an ordinary marriage. Certainly his conduct never gave rise to public scandals as did that of his brothers, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. That his position did not strike him as in any way peculiar is shown by his surprising appearance in the House of Lords as an ally of the Bishops in defence of morals, when the Divorce Bill was debated. His speech was heartily endorsed by the Duke of York, at that time living with Mrs. Clark.

When, after some twenty years, the Duke of Clarence severed his connection with Mrs. Jordan, she was soon obliged, though past her prime, to return to the stage in order to support the children of a previous connection. She subsequently died in straitened circumstances in France, where she was living to avoid her creditors. It was well known that she had made large sums during her stage career, and also that the Duke had promised her a handsome settlement; consequently her financial troubles lent colour to the suggestion that the Duke had been living on her earnings, and had thrown her over when she was no longer able to keep him. That he had, to some extent, been spending her money, seems definitely established, but it is only fair to add that Mrs. Jordan herself would never hear a word against him. He was bitterly attacked in the press for deserting her in her troubles, while his subsequent attempts to marry an heiress provoked much ridicule.

When the death of the Princess Charlotte, only daughter of George IV, brought the Duke of Clarence near the throne, he conceived it his duty to his country to marry and produce an heir. His country, as represented by the House of Commons, proved less grateful

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than he felt he had a right to expect, and he was so disgusted by the meagre marriage settlement proposed that he threatened to break off the match. By the end of 1818, however, he was safely married to a German Princess, and had taken his Duchess on a continental tour of visits to relations.

There now began amongst the Royal Dukes an intensive effort to produce a legitimate heir to the throne of England. The year 1819 saw a number of births in the Royal circle; the Duchesses of Clarence and Cambridge had children within a few days of each other, though the Clarence child died almost immediately, whilst in May occurred what was subsequently to prove the most momentous birth of all, that of the Princess Victoria of Kent.

All the Duke of Clarence's prospects of legitimate issue ended similarly in disappointment, though he appears to have continued hoping until the end of his life. Two years before his death Greville heard rumours that an heir was imminent, while the Queen had only to look ill to start Society speculating whether, in the event of her death, the King would marry again and produce a Prince of Wales.

To his Fitzclarence children (Mrs. Jordan's) he was a devoted father, and on becoming King did his best to provide them with both rank and position.

At first the Duke of Clarence thoroughly enjoyed being King. Charles Greville describes his accession in 1830:

'His exaltation (for the moment) completely turned his head, but as his situation got familiar to him he became more composed and rational, if not more dignified in his behaviour. The moral and intellectual qualities of

the King, however insignificant in themselves, now became, from their unavoidable influence, an object of great interest and importance, and in the early part of his reign he acquired no small share of popularity. People liked a King whose habits presented such a striking contrast to those of his predecessor. His attention to business, his frank and good-humoured familiarity, and his general hospitality, were advantageously compared with the luxurious and selfish indolence and habits of seclusion in the society of dull and grasping favourites which characterised the former reign. . . .’

Throughout his reign, however, he remained decidedly eccentric:

‘ . . . The most remarkable foible of the late King was his passion for speechifying; and I have recorded some of his curious exhibitions in this way. He had considerable faculty in expressing himself, but what he said was generally useless or improper. He never received the homage of a bishop without giving him a lecture; and the custom he introduced of giving toasts and making speeches at all his dinners was more suitable to a tavern than to a palace. He was totally deficient in dignity and refinement, and neither his elevation to the throne nor his association with people of the most distinguished manners could give him any tincture of the one or the other. Though a good natured and amiable man, he was passionate and hasty, and thus he was led into those bickerings and quarrels with the Duchess of Kent and with his own children, which were a perpetual source of discomfort or disgrace to him, and all of which might have been avoided by a more consistent course of firmness and temper on his part. . . .’

Unlike George IV, he was believed to be in sympathy

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with liberal tendencies, and to approve of the Reform Bill on which the progressively-minded centred their hopes. He was enthusiastically acclaimed; even his name (Reform 'Bill') was treated as a good omen. But as opposition to the Bill strengthened and the temper of the country rose, he took fright. Around him were none but gloomy faces; the elderly Princesses were nervous; his Queen's only hope was that, when summoned to the scaffold, she might show as much dignity as Marie Antoinette. The Bill was eventually carried, but the King's defection had become known, and his popularity was diminished. Towards the end of his life, his people were even contrasting him unfavourably with George IV, who was at least dignified, and would never, for instance, have spat out of the window of his state coach on a ceremonious occasion.

Knowing that his own popularity had waned, he was particularly irritated at the attempts of the Duchess of Kent, his sister-in-law and mother of the Princess Victoria, to acquire it. As there was no direct heir, the Duchess would become Regent if the King died before her daughter had come of age, and she felt that she had hitherto been grossly neglected, as she was really in the position of a Dowager Princess of Wales. She disapproved of the Court, and kept her daughter away from it as much as possible. She naturally looked forward to a great increase in her authority when the King died, and took little trouble to hide her feelings. In this course she was encouraged by Sir John Conroy, who acted as her secretary and evidently believed that, by enhancing the Duchess's power, he would increase his own. Certainly the Duchess appeared very much under his influence, whilst he himself behaved with offensive self-import-

ance, making himself generally disliked. To the King's intense annoyance, the Duchess took every opportunity of currying favour with the people, receiving as many loyal addresses as possible, with Conroy standing at her side and generally behaving as her confidential adviser.

Relations between the King and the Duchess grew steadily worse, until the King's weakness for making speeches precipitated an open quarrel. Charles Greville was, for once, not present at the scene, but did not rest until he had obtained the whole story from Adolphus Fitzclarence, the King's favourite son:

' . . . The King invited the Duchess of Kent to go to Windsor on the 12th August to celebrate the Queen's birthday (13th) and to stay there over his own birthday, which was to be kept (privately) on the 21st (the real day, but falling on Sunday) and publicly the day following. She sent word that she wanted to keep her own birthday at Claremont on the 15th (or whatever the day is) took no notice of the Queen's birthday, but said she would go to Windsor on the 20th. This put the King in a fury; he made, however, no reply, and on the 20th he was in town to prorogue Parliament, having desired that they would not wait for dinner for him at Windsor. After the prorogation he went to Kensington to look about it; when he got there he found that the Duchess of Kent had appropriated to her own use a suite of apartments, seventeen in number, for which she had applied last year, and which he had refused to let her have. This increased his ill-humour, already excessive. When he arrived at Windsor and went into the drawing-room (at about 10 o'clock at night) where the whole party was assembled, he went up to the Princess Victoria, took hold of both her hands, and expressed his pleasure at seeing

her there, and regret at not seeing her oftener. He then turned to the Duchess and made her a low bow, almost immediately after which he said that "a most unwarrantable liberty had been taken with one of his palaces; that he had just come from Kensington, where he found apartments had been taken possession of not only without his consent but contrary to his commands, and that he neither understood nor would endure conduct so disrespectful to him." This was said loudly, publicly, and in a tone of serious displeasure. It was, however, only the muttering of the storm which was to break the next day. Adolphus Fitzclarence went into his room on Sunday morning and found him in a state of great excitement. It was his birthday, and though the celebration was what was called private, there were a hundred people at dinner, either belonging to the Court or from the neighbourhood. The Duchess of Kent sat on one side of the King and one of his sisters on the other, the Princess Victoria opposite. Adolphus Fitzclarence sat two or three from the Duchess, and heard every word of what passed. After dinner, by the Queen's desire, "His Majesty's health and long life to him" was given, and as soon as it was drunk he made a very long speech, in the course of which he poured forth the following extraordinary and *foudroyante tirade*: "I trust in God that my life may be spared for nine months longer, after which period, in the event of my death, no regency would take place. I should then have the satisfaction of leaving the royal authority to the personal exercise of that young Lady (pointing to the Princess), the heiress presumptive of the Crown, and not in the hands of a person now near me, who is surrounded by evil advisers and who is herself incompetent to act with propriety in the station in

which she would be placed. I have no hesitation in saying that I have been insulted—grossly and continually insulted—by that person, but I am determined to endure no longer a course of behaviour so disrespectful to me. Amongst other things I have particularly to complain of the manner in which that young lady has been kept away from my Court; she has been repeatedly kept from my drawing-rooms at which she ought always to have been present, but I am fully resolved that this shall not happen again. I would have her know that I am King, and I am determined to make my authority respected, and for the future I shall insist and command that the Princess do upon all occasions appear at my Court, as it is her duty to do.” He terminated his speech by an allusion to the Princess and her future reign in a tone of paternal interest and affection which was excellent in its way.

‘This awful philippic (with a great deal more which I forget) was uttered with a loud voice and excited manner. The Queen looked in deep distress, the Princess burst into tears, and the whole company was aghast. The Duchess of Kent said not a word. Immediately after they rose and retired, and a terrible scene ensued; the Duchess announced her immediate departure and ordered her carriage, but a sort of reconciliation was patched up, and she was prevailed upon to stay until the next day. . . .

‘Nothing can be more unaccountable than the Duchess of Kent’s behaviour to the King, nothing more reprehensible; but his behaviour to her has always been as injudicious and undignified as possible, and this last sortie was monstrous.’

Meanwhile the Duchess was forming what Greville

called an 'embryo Court' in which 'the elements of intrigue do not seem wanting'. Her brother Leopold, once husband of George IV's daughter the Princess Charlotte, and present King of Belgium, was known to be only too willing to advise the future Queen. Lord Durham, the Radical leader, had been friendly with the Duchess; he was on his way home from St. Petersburg and generally expected 'to endeavour to play a great political part and materially to influence the opinions, or at least the councils' of his future Sovereign. Sir John Conroy's ambitions were blatantly obvious, whilst another member of the Duchess's household, Colonel Caradoc, was 'suspected of a design and ambition to become a personage'. The one unknown factor in the situation was the personality of the young Princess herself.

The King achieved his wish of living till his niece had reached her eighteenth birthday, though 'he was very nearly dying just as the event arrived', says Greville, and 'his recovery will not have been accelerated by the Duchess of Kent's answer to the City of London's address, in which she went into the history of her life, and talked of her "friendless state" on arriving in this country, the gist of it being that, having been abandoned or neglected by the Royal Family, she had thrown herself on the country.' Annoyance may have acted as a tonic, for the King rallied sufficiently to turn the tables on the Duchess by offering the Princess Victoria an independent allowance. Still, his illness had been sufficiently severe to set people wondering about the character of his successor.

Extraordinarily little was known of the young Princess. Henry Greville, the more social brother of Charles, had once stayed in the same house, and talked to her

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governess, the Baroness Lehzen. He noted in his diary: 'At dinner I sat next to the Baroness, who assured me that the Princess was a delightful child, not at all shy, fond of music and drawing, and has a great facility for learning modern languages. She always sleeps in her mother's room, and from the time she could speak has never been left alone with a servant. The Baroness always sits and reads to her while she dresses, and sits in her bedroom until the Duchess goes to bed.' Even the Duchess seems to have known remarkably little of her own daughter.

Her confirmation by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1835 was described by a lady who was present as 'a very affecting ceremony'. The Archbishop gave her a 'paternal exhortation' on 'the duties she was called on to fulfil'. 'Her mother stood by her side, weeping audibly, as did the Queen and the other ladies. The old King frequently shed tears, nodding his head at each impressive part of the discourse. The little Princess was drowned in tears and frightened to death.' She had, evidently, acquired an insight into her responsibilities.

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William IV had been expected to die for so long that when he actually did so his death came as a surprise. Here is part of a letter by Mary Berry, an unusually well informed lady, written a week before it.

'I am writing to you in anxious suspense or rather I should say, very active curiosity to know whether we are still under the rule of William the 4th, or whether

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Victoria has succeeded to the Crown of these Realms—I was yesterday in London for a couple of hours—all the town was *en émeute* and pouring in hundreds to St. James's where the Bulletin shown was a favourable one—but before I left town Lord Caledon returned from the House of Lords to tell us, that an express had arrived within the last hour from Windsor, that the King was much worse, and that the Council was desired to assemble immediately—This sounded as bad as possible short of actual death—Since this I have heard nothing and will not continue my letter till I know more.'

A week later Miss Wynn was writing:

'After a few days of most unsatisfactory bulletins, a prayer for the King was ordered, and sent with pitiful economy by the twopenny post, so that, although the prayer appeared in every newspaper by Saturday evening, it was received by hardly any of the London clergy in time for morning service on Sunday. In our chapel, prayers were desired for *Our Sovereign Lord the King, lying dangerously ill*; and these were introduced in the Litany, just as they would have been for the poorest of his subjects! To me, this simple ancient form was far more impressive than the *fancy* prayer, though it was a good one of its sort.

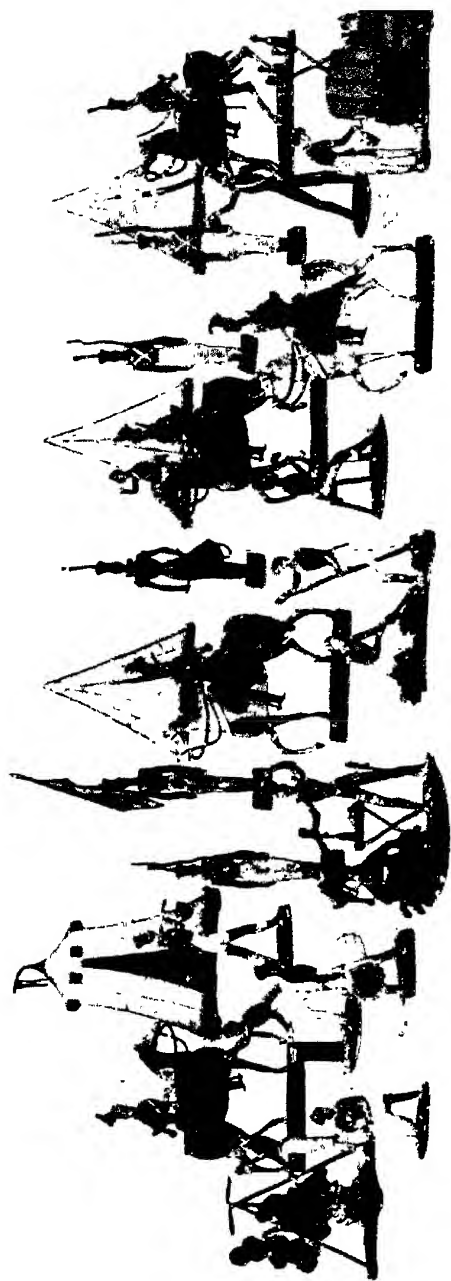
'On Monday we were listening all day for the tolling of the bells, watching whether the guests were going to the Waterloo dinner at Apsley House. On Tuesday at 2½ a.m. the scene closed, and in a very short time the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Lord Conyngham, the Chamberlain, set out to announce the event to their young Sovereign. They reached Kensington Palace at about five; they knocked, they rang, they thumped for a considerable time before they could rouse the porter

at the gates; they were again kept waiting in the courtyard, then turned into one of the lower rooms, where they seemed forgotten by everybody. They rang the bell, desired that the attendant of the Princess Victoria might be sent to inform her Royal Highness that they requested an audience on business of importance; after another delay, and another ringing to enquire the cause, the attendant was summoned, who stated that the Princess was in such a sweet sleep that she could not venture to disturb her. Then they said, "We are come to the *Queen* on business of state, and even her sleep must give way to that." It did; and to prove that *she* did not keep them waiting, in a few minutes she came into the room in a loose white night-gown and shawl, her night-cap thrown off, and her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified.'

Greville tells us that on hearing the words 'Your Majesty' she held out her hand to be kissed.

Naturally all her subjects were agog to see her. Mary Berry continues her letter:

"Tuesday, 29th June. And now I hardly know more than you and all the world know—That the King is dead, and that a girl of eighteen (looking like twelve), is on the Throne of these Kingdoms. It is however remarkable that she has so conducted herself, in such a new, such a trying situation, for one hitherto considered almost a child, that everybody of all parties agree in admiration of her steadiness, modesty and intelligence—I have seen her only on her return to Kensington from her Proclamation on Wednesday last at St. James's—Her little round face looked very pale, and very serious, for she had been much moved at the shouts of the



2. Toy Soldiers



5. Military Heroes from a Children's Book
Above Napoleon. *Below* Wellington

people, under the window at which she stood, and where all our Kings stood during the ceremony—Her little hands trembled leaning on the bar of the window, and her eyes filled with tears—As yet she has taken no particular notice, nor addressed herself to any one class of persons more than to another, but replies with much measure, and good sense to her Ministers. The scene at Council, I was told by those present, the first two days was remarkable.

‘At the top of a large table covered with scarlet cloth, sat under a little black bonnet, a little round, fair face, without another female near her, surrounded by all the Privy Counsellors in full dress, and all the Ministers and Magnets of the Land, to take the Oaths and kiss her hands—As for the business part of the Privy Council, it was got over just as well as by any other, older Prince, the notes read to her and her *address* prompted by the Minister at her side.’

And now began the enthralling question of who would be what under the new reign. Who would be the Ladies of the Bedchamber, what would become of the King’s illegitimate children? And even, what would become of the government, since an Accession required a General Election.

‘The Government will be much sooner settled, than her Household—The first, must depend entirely upon the colour of the New Parliament, which they say is to be assembled in October—If that is Tory, she must necessarily be a Tory Queen. If that is Whig, she must necessarily be a Whig Queen. *Pro tempore*, be it well understood, both of the one, and the other. In the meantime some advances are made in the formation of her household. The young Duchess of Sutherland is Mis-

tress of the Robes, and Lady Lansdowne, Lady Tavistock and Lady Charlemont are Ladies of the Bedchamber; the others not named yet'; and will, thinks Miss Berry, be just names put in to 'fill up the hexametre of the Ladies of the Bedchamber'. 'And what is the great Caradoc to be? Not I should suppose Gentleman Usher to the *Dowager Duchess of Kent*. I think there is a role in a former female reign, that might suit him better. Is it possible his vanity should rise to that?' As for the Queen, she writes 'an excellent good steady manly-like handwriting', with which Miss Berry is much impressed.

Meanwhile preparations were being made for the King's funeral. Rather surprisingly, his subjects appeared to be really moved by his death. Miss Wynn writes:

'It is very interesting to compare the appearance of the town now with that which it wore after the death of George IV; *then*, few, very few, thought it necessary to assume the mask of grief; *now*, one feeling seems to actuate the nation; party is forgotten, and all mourn, if not so deeply, quite as unanimously, as they did for Princess Charlotte.

'How strange it is that, in thinking of a departed Sovereign, one can from the bottom of the heart pray, "May my latter end be like his." Who that can look back some years—say to the period when we saw the Duke of Clarence at Stowe, where he was certainly endured only as an appendage of the Prince of Wales—who would have thought that he would have died more loved, more lamented, than either of his predecessors on the throne? Least of all, who could have thought that he would have died the death of a good Christian, deriving

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comfort and hope from religion, and every alleviation which the most devoted conjugal affection could shed over him. Even his sins seem to have poured from their foul source pure streams of comfort in the attentions and affection of his children. The Queen is said to have complained that in the last days, after he well knew his situation, she never was left alone with him. The public, edified by every detail which comes to light, can feel but one regret, which is, that the Princess Victoria was not summoned to receive his blessing.'

But such emotion as the King's death aroused seems scarcely to have lasted till his burial. Owing to the incompetence of the authorities, there was much disorder amongst the vast crowds that flocked to the Abbey. Greville noticed people laughing and joking at the foot of the hearse. London with its influx of visitors looked like a town on holiday.

The incompetence shown in the funeral arrangements characterised all the opening stages of the new reign. Miss Wynn heard that the scene at the Council 'of swearing allegiance to their young Sovereign was more like the bidding at an auction than anything else'. There had not been a queen for a hundred and thirty years, so that the clerks in Parliament had forgotten the feminine forms of the Norman French, and their sovereign was mentioned in an epicene jargon. The question of the form of services for the Accession was very simply settled. It was decided to substitute She for He in the Christological psalms. Ticklish points of etiquette were constantly coming up. We read of one such in the *Lady's Magazine*:

'*The Queen's Garter Arm.* The Queen in an interview with the Duke of Norfolk, preparatory to the

creating her Mother a Knight of the Garter, after the preliminaries were arranged with the Earl Marshall, said, with simple naïveté, "My Lord Duke, where am I to wear the garter?" The Duke in reply said he recollected seeing some print of Queen Anne, in which the garter was placed on her left arm. By reference to various authorities, that fact was established.'

Indeed it seemed at first as though the only perfectly calm and collected person was the young Queen herself. Her only real display of emotion was when, at her Proclamation, she appeared at a window to show herself to her subjects. Such was the cheering, led by, of all people, Daniel O'Connell, 'the Irish Liberator', that she burst into tears.

As the reign wore on, the character of the young Queen began to emerge. Greville noted:

'All that I hear of the young Queen leads to the conclusion that she will some day play a conspicuous part, and that she has a great deal of character. It is clear enough that she has long been silently preparing herself, and has been prepared by those about her (and very properly) to the situation to which she was destined. The impressions she has made continue to be favourable, and particularly upon Melbourne, who has a thousand times greater opportunities of knowing what her disposition and her capacity are than any other person, and who is not a man to be easily captivated or dazzled by any superficial accomplishments or mere graces of manner, or even by personal favour. Melbourne thinks highly of her sense, discretion and good feeling; but what seem to distinguish her above everything are caution and prudence, the former to a degree which is almost unnatural in one so young, and displeasing be-

cause it suppresses the youthful impulses which are so graceful and attractive.'

Creevy reporting a Royal dinner writes, 'Now for her appearance—but all in the strictest confidence. A more homely little being you never beheld, *when she is at her ease*, and she is evidently dying to be always more so. She laughs in real earnest, opening her mouth as wide as it can go, showing not very pretty gums. . . . She eats quite as heartily as she laughs, I think I may say she gobbles. . . . She blushes and laughs every instant in so natural a way as to disarm anybody. Her voice is perfect, and so is the expression of her face when she means to say or do a pretty thing. . . . To mitigate the harshness of any criticism I may pronounce upon her manners, let me express my conviction that she and her mother are one. I never saw a more pretty or natural devotion than she shows to her mother. . . .' But here his sharp old eyes for once deceived him, and we find him writing later, 'Then alas, tho' last not least . . . in truth Vic and her mother are *not* one, tho' Melbourne knows no other cause of this disunion than Conroy, whom the Duchess of Kent sees still almost daily. . . .'

The Queen's treatment of Conroy was a source of vast interest to Society. As Greville says, she lost no time in giving him notice as to her intentions. 'She saw him; and desired him to name the reward he expected for his services to her parents. He asked for the Red Ribbon, an Irish peerage and a pension of 3000 a year. She replied that the first two rested with her Ministers . . . but the pension he should have.' Having been paid 'he has never once been invited to the palace, or distinguished by the slightest mark of personal favour. . . .' Most people felt this to be a good riddance, but unfortunately

it was not the last of this rather sordid business, which was to flare up a few years later into the Lady Flora Hastings scandal.

The Fitzclarences had been awaiting the future in some trepidation, but Creevy was soon to be 'enchanted with her' for her munificence to them. Indeed it was becoming daily more apparent that in the quarrels between her mother and her uncle, she had privately sided with the latter. In public matters the Queen was entirely in the hands of Lord Melbourne, who frequented the palace so much that Creevy soon caught a delightful rumour that he hoped to marry his sovereign. The opposition began to complain of this intimacy, and their cartoonist, H.B., produced a picture of the Queen riding between Lords Melbourne and Palmerston, entitled 'Susanah and the Elders'. Two or three years later, when the Queen and her Foreign Secretary no longer saw eye to eye, the drawing afforded cynical persons much amusement.

In private affairs she soon showed an unexpected side to her character. Mary Berry writes:

'The little Queen has already shown that she has character and a will of her own—She insisted on getting into the new palace which she is to inhabit, and leaving Kensington last week—In vain they urged the furniture was incomplete and the carpets not down—There was furniture enough for her, and she did not care for carpets. She made good her point and that very evening gave a dinner to her People in Waiting, and some of her Ministers, and sang and played with the Duchess of Kent afterwards—Every day since, she has had a party dining with her. The Tories would willingly peck at this, and think she begins too soon—But can anything be more

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natural for a very young person, intelligent, and in such a situation! To like to enjoy the liberty, and the power it gives her! Poor little Soul! Let her have something for the necessary abdication of all the sentiments and gaieties and carelessness of youth. . . .

‘I was much pleased to hear such an excellent account of the Queen’s dress, for I dreaded a little, my dear Duchess’ [of Sutherland] taste in her *Robes*, luckily in those of State, she could have little room to exhibit *taste*—On Friday, the Queen is to appear before the Guards in Hyde Park *on horseback*—On horseback she has determined she will be, in spite of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Melbourne’s advice—and certainly, as far as popularity goes, she will completely turn John Bull’s head, *on Horseback*—’ But a day or two later we hear from Miss Berry:

‘The Review of the Guards is postponed indefinitely—I fancy because they found the little Generalissima determined on Horseback and that they did not like to venture it. Nothing is certainly necessary at present, to add to her popularity—There were fourteen hundred people at the Levee yesterday and before it was over the poor little Thing was so tired she could hardly hold up her hand to be kissed—Today there will certainly be as many at the Drawing-Room.’

Speculating on the young Queen’s future, Mary Berry, who could remember people who had known the last reigning Queen of England, writes:

‘If she has indeed an ounce of either head or heart it will count for much more in her sex, and extreme youth, than the same quantum would do in a *Prince*, of the same age. The idea of sex will, in spite of politics, enter for much in protecting, supporting and getting her on

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well—The best thing that can be done for a Court in these Anti-Monarchial days, is to make it *Au fashion*—Such a thing has not happened here since the days of Charles the 2nd, George the 4th was in fashion for a year or two, but it was while he was in direct opposition to the Court, and so *his fashion* worked all the other way. But I have recommended earnestly to the Duchess of Sutherland to set about this magnum opus seriously, as the only way to be politically important if she should have any political corner or ambitious misgivings in her composition.’

If we remember how the personality of the Queen was to set its stamp on her reign, this half-joking suggestion certainly seems to have been right.



Queen Victoria



II. SOCIETY



Looking back some forty-five years to Society as it was when he was first dressing and talking his way into it, Disraeli wrote:

‘The great world then, compared with the huge society of the present period, was limited in its proportions, and composed of elements more refined, though far less various. It consisted mainly of the great landed aristocracy, who had quite absorbed the nabobs of India, and had nearly appropriated the huge West Indian fortunes. Occasionally, an eminent banker or merchant invested a large portion of his accumulations in land, and in the purchase of parliamentary influence, and was in time admitted to the sanctuary. But those vast and successful invasions of society by new classes, which have since occurred, though impending, had not yet commenced. There were then, perhaps, more great houses open than at the present day, but there were very few little ones. . . .’

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In the great houses there can be little doubt that a young Whig at this time came off much better than a young Tory. The failings of the Whigs, their traditions of social exclusiveness and political jobbing, have often been satirised. They were alleged to have all descended from a certain Earl Gower, and since to have only moved in what Beresford Hope called the 'Sacred Circle of Great-Grandmotherhood'. 'They are our superiors, and that's a fact,' wrote Thackeray in the *Book of Snobs*. 'I'm not a Whig myself; (perhaps it is as unnecessary to say so, as to say I'm not King Pippin in a Golden Coach, or King Hudson, or Miss Burdett Coutts). I'm not a Whig myself, but oh, how I should like to be one.'

But if Whig society was founded on relationship, there was by this time a wide opening for talent of all kinds. So the society of the great Whig noblemen, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Holland, Lord Melbourne, was also that of Macaulay, Sydney Smith, Brougham, Mackintosh, Jeffrey, with Luttrell, Samuel Rogers, Tom Moore, and indeed practically all the famous names of the period.

One of the great Whig centres with fine traditions of hospitality, was Lansdowne House, where the scientist Priestley had once been sheltered, and where, at this time, the society gathered round the third Marquis was said to be even more literary than political. A great patron of the arts, Lord Lansdowne formed a fine collection of old pictures, besides those of contemporary painters such as Wilkie and Leslie. He was one of the benefactors to whom Haydon was constantly turning for help from his creditors.

Another famous Whig centre was Devonshire House, where the fifth Duke and his Duchess, the celebrated

Georgiana, entertained the friends of Fox. The sixth Duke maintained these traditions, but as he, like Lord Lansdowne, was a bachelor, society at these two houses was predominantly, though not exclusively, masculine. The Duke of Devonshire also owned Chiswick House, still very much in the country, where, during the summer months especially, fêtes and garden-parties were held. Famous Chiswick House entertainments were the reception of the Allied Sovereigns in 1814, and of Queen Victoria and the Tsar of Russia in the '40's. Both Fox and Canning had died at Chiswick House. To show how beloved was Fox, Samuel Rogers related going to a fête at Chiswick House many years later, and that a friend of Fox in passing the room where he died, burst into tears.

By far and away the most famous of the great political houses was Holland House. It had been a stronghold of advanced Whiggery since 1799, and remained a great social centre till Lord Holland's death in 1840. For all its political character, the interests of its owners were sufficiently wide to include the most famous names in politics, science, art, literature and scholarship amongst their guests. 'It is the house of all Europe,' says Charles Greville. 'Though everybody who goes there finds something to abuse or to ridicule in the mistress of the house or its ways, all continue to go; all like it more or less; and whenever, by the death of either, it shall come to an end, a vacuum will be made in society which nothing will supply.'

It would be impossible to name a tithe of the frequenters of Holland House. Sooner or later, anybody who had made a name would find their way there, although owing to a certain irregularity in the Hollands' marriage, some of the severest sticklers for social eti-

quette refused to frequent it. Amongst the wits may be mentioned Sydney Smith, the reforming parson, Rogers, the banker turned poet, whose own hospitality was famous, and Luttrell, about whom very little was known by his associates. Macaulay poured out the stores of his learning on the slightest pretext, often to be brusquely cut short by his hostess. Lord Melbourne delighted to discuss theology, and had many an argument with Allen, Lord Holland's librarian and a passionate unbeliever. The latter once asked Sydney Smith if he ever wrote poetry, and was told in reply: 'Rarely, but next Whit Sunday I will attempt an ode to Religion, and dedicate it to you.' Lady Holland complained that she could never see the difference between the Resurrection and the Ascension, she could not understand these subtle distinctions. When Macaulay came to the conclusion that God must be limited by law, as Jove was coerced by fate—that evil was something in itself necessary and beyond His jurisdiction, Thompson pointed out 'that this was such a Whig notion of a *Constitutional* God.' And indeed it is.

Of Hallam, the Whig historian, Sydney Smith used to say that when the watchman called out half-past three o'clock he jumped out of bed and said from the window, 'It's four.' Other frequent visitors were Tom Moore, most sought-after of poets to judge by his own diary, and those two devoted retailers of gossip, Charles Greville and old Creevy.

Lord Holland's society was delightful; he had been in the innermost political circles since childhood, and abounded in anecdotes of celebrities of bygone days. His charm compensated for his wife's eccentricity and overbearing manners, which only too often amounted

to downright rudeness. Sooner or later her insolences would be forgiven, and the indignant guest would return to endure further snubbings.

Innumerable were the anecdotes told of Lady Holland, her domineering character, her insatiable curiosity, but also her generosity. Macaulay, writing to his sister in 1831, gives his first impressions of the hostess who was so often to entertain him, and so ruthlessly to prune his conversational luxuriance:

‘I observed a portrait of Lady Holland, painted some thirty years ago. I could have cried to see the change. . . . She still looks, however, as if she had been handsome . . . after breakfast Lady Holland offered to conduct me to her own drawing-room, or rather commanded my attendance. . . . She is certainly a woman of considerable talents and great literary acquirements. To me she was excessively gracious: yet there is a haughtiness in her courtesy which, even after all that I had heard of her, surprised me. The centurion did not keep his soldiers in order better than she keeps her guests. It is to one, “Go,” and he goeth; and to another, “do this,” and it is done. “Ring the bell, Mr. Macaulay.” “Lay down that screen, Lord Russell, you will spoil it.” “Mr. Allen, take a candle and show Mr. Cradock that picture of Buonaparte.” . . . Lord Holland, on the other hand, is all kindness, simplicity and vivacity. . . . Having gone round the grounds, I took my leave, very much pleased with the place. Lord Holland is extremely kind. . . . Her ladyship too, which is by no means of course, is all graciousness and civility. . . .’

Lady Holland’s methods of extracting information were invariably by direct enquiry—she was, however, occasionally baffled. A conspicuous figure at her gather-

ings was Henry Luttrell, brilliant conversationalist, and author of the witty *Advice to Julia*. He was, as Greville puts it, 'born in mystery', and 'always shrouded himself in a secrecy which none of his acquaintance have ever endeavoured to penetrate.' He was obviously getting on in years, having sat in the last Irish Parliament before the Union, but his precise age no one knew. Lady Holland, as usual, asked him point blank, 'Now, Luttrell, we are all dying to know how old you are. Just tell me?' Eyeing his questioner gravely, Luttrell made answer, 'It's an odd question; but as you, Lady Holland, ask it, I don't mind telling you. If I live till next year, I shall be—devilish old.'

Lady Holland likewise once essayed to solve the great literary mystery of the authorship of the *Letters of Junius*. She asked Sir Philip Francis, the greatest suspect, direct, only to receive an equally unsatisfactory answer, says Samuel Rogers. Such was her domineering temper that any failures were delightedly treasured by her guests.

One of her favourite gambits seems almost unbelievably puerile, but is vouched for by many witnesses. She would drop her napkin or handkerchief for the pleasure of seeing her companion retrieve it. To Fanny Kemble's sister Adelaide, who had somewhat reluctantly complied, she remarked, 'Ah, I thought you would do that.' On one occasion, if we are to believe Lady Granville, she even vanquished the haughty and exclusive Princess Lieven. Lady Granville writes:

'Madame de Lieven and she are great friends: "Ma chère, j'étais chez elle. Il y avait Durazzo, Molé, Humboldt. On annonce Pasquier. Elle a l'air tout charmée, tout flattée. Elle me dit, 'Restez, je vous supplie; causez

avec le Chancelier.' Je résiste. Elle m'implore de ne pas l'abandonner. Je cède. Pas plutôt assise avec tout cet entourage qui nous regarde, qu'elle laisse tomber son sac. Elle me tape sur l'épaule: 'Pick it up, my dear; pick it up'—et moi, toute étonnée, en bonne bête, me plonger sur le tapis pour ramasser ses chiffons." Is not this a true and incomparable Holly-ism, taking out of Lieven's mouth the taste of the little flutter of the visits and the *besoin* of her support . . . and showing off, what I believe never was seen before, Madame de Lieven as a humble companion?" Count D'Orsay was more successful. 'Her ladyship', relates Captain Gronow, 'was continually letting her napkin slip from her lap to the ground, and as soon as she did so, she smiled blandly, but authoritatively, on the French Count, and asked him to pick it up. He politely complied several times, but at last . . . he said: "Ne ferais-je pas mieux, Madame, de m'asseoir sous la table; afin de pouvoir vous passer la serviette plus rapidement?"'

Lady Holland ruled her husband as well as her guests. Samuel Rogers said that 'Lord Holland never ventured to ask anyone to dinner (not even me whom he had known so intimately) without previously consulting Lady H. Shortly before her death, I called at Holland House, and found only Lady H. within. As I was coming out, I met Lord Holland, who said, "Well, do you return to dinner?" I answered, "No; I have not been invited." Perhaps this deference to Lady Holland was not to be regretted; for Lord Holland was so hospitable and good natured that, had he been left to himself, he would have had a crowd at his table daily.'

Holland House reunions were sometimes select, but by no means always: Greville notes 'a true Holland

House dinner, two more people arriving (Melbourne and Tom Duncombe) than there was room for, so that Lady Holland had the pleasure of a couple of general squeezes, and of seeing our arms prettily pinioned. Lord Holland sits at table, but does not dine. He proposed to retire (not from the room) but was not allowed, for that would have given us all space and ease. Lord Holland told some stories of Johnson and Garrick, which he had heard from Kemble.' After dinner the Chancellor, Lord Brougham, came in, 'looking like an old clothes man, and dirty as the ground.' On a similar occasion, Lady Holland having called out, 'Make room, Mr. Luttrell,' she received the reply, 'It will indeed be to make it, Lady Holland, for it does not exist.'

Holland House breakfasts were famous.

'Men who breakfast out are generally Liberals', says Lady St. Julians in *Sybil*. 'Have you not observed that?'

'I wonder why?'

'It shows a restless revolutionary mind', said Lady Firebrace, 'that can settle to nothing, but must be running after gossip the moment they are awake.'

'Yes,' said Lady St. Julians, 'I think those men who breakfast out, or who give breakfasts, are generally dangerous characters; at least, I would not trust them.'

Whilst Holland House receptions were eclectic, those of the famous Sarah Countess of Jersey were exclusive. Possessing both rank and wealth (she had inherited the fortune of her grandfather, the banker Child), Lady Jersey wielded great social influence. Though in politics Tory, she entertained sufficiently distinguished members of all parties. Creevy records going on there one evening when Holland House was dull, and that Lady Holland complained of losing all her



4. Skating in Regent's Park, with the Coliseum in the background



5. The Regent Zoological Gardens

company to Lady Jersey. With this Creevy privately agreed for he thought the latter 'a host in herself'. At times political tension interrupted social relations, as when the Drawing Room at which Princess Victoria first appeared became still more memorable to the gossip mongers, owing to a set-to between Lady Jersey and Lord Durham.

Lady Jersey wished particularly to disassociate herself from the lurid reputation of her mother-in-law, George IV's Lady Jersey. She therefore cultivated exclusiveness in social relations. She also liked to be in the latest fashion, know the latest news, and display her conversational powers. As patroness of Almack's, she displayed both social despotism and social airs, says Gronow. 'Her bearing was that of a theatrical tragedy queen, whilst attempting the sublime she frequently made herself ridiculous, being inconceivably rude, and her manners often ill-bred.'

These characteristics of her youth persisted in later life, so that she was never popular outside her immediate set, as witness the remark of her younger rival, Lady Morley, to a friend who was gushing about Lady Jersey's appearance in Court mourning, magnificent in black and diamonds, so that 'it was like night'. 'Yes, my dear, *minuit passé*.'

Owing to her position as a leader of fashion, Lady Jersey was constantly drawn in the 'society novels' of the period, usually in no flattering manner. The most famous of these portraits of her at the time are as 'Lady St. Julians' in *Coningsby* and *Sybil*, and 'Zenobia' in *Endymion*. As 'Lady St. Julians' her interest is divided between politics and getting her daughters married: 'She made it a rule to go everywhere and to visit everybody,

provided they had power, wealth, and fashion.' She knew no crime except a woman not living with her husband; that was past pardon. As long as his presence sanctioned her conduct, however shameless, it did not signify; but if the husband were a brute, neglected his wife first, then deserted her; then if a breath but sullied her name, she must be crushed; unless indeed her own family were very powerful, which makes a difference, and sometimes softens immorality into indiscretion.

Here are her views on patronage:

'People get into Parliament to get on; their aims are indefinite. If they have indulged in hallucination about place before they enter the House they are soon freed from such distempered fancies; they find they have no more talent than other people, and if they had, they learn that power, patronage and pay are reserved for us and our friends.

'Well then, like practical men, they look to some result, and they get it. They are asked out to dinner more than they would be, they move rigmarole resolutions at nonsensical public meetings; and they get invited with their woman to assemblies at their leaders, and where they see stars and blue ribbons, and above all, us, who they little think, in appearing on such occasions, make the greatest conceivable sacrifice. . . . Ask them to a ball, and they will give you their votes; invite them to a dinner, and, if necessary, they will rescind them; but cultivate them, remember their wives at assemblies, and call their daughters if possible by their right names; and they will not only change their principles or desert their party for you, but subscribe their fortunes, if necessary, and lay down their lives in your service.'

By the time Lady Jersey appears as Zenobia, her por-

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trayer is some forty years older, and in the gratifying position of dispensing rather than requiring patronage. We see her in better perspective, as a great society hostess in the palmy days of social exclusiveness; as 'the Queen of London, of fashion, and of the Tory party. When she was not holding high festivals, or attending them, she was always at home to her intimates, and as she deigned but rarely to honour the assemblies of others with her presence, she was generally at her evening post to receive the initiated. To be her invited guest under such circumstances proved at once that you had entered the highest circle of the social paradise.'

Her old traits reappear; she is still haughty, exclusive, fond of displaying her conversational abilities, and piques herself on her inside information (often wrong): 'She declared there was only one man in England able to save the situation, and thanked heaven he was in her drawing room;' 'She listened, among her many talents perhaps her rarest.' But she is also given the qualities of acuteness, courage and determination, which she must obviously have possessed in real life to obtain her social ascendancy in a society closer and more critical than exists today.

Another Irish hostess was Sydney Lady Morgan, 'the wild Irish girl,' who moved into No. 11 William Street, opposite the Albert Gate, in 1838. Daughter of an actor, she delighted to boast that she had been independent since the age of fourteen. Her novels of Irish life made her a literary reputation. S. C. Hall records saying to her, ' "Lady Morgan, I bought one of your books today. May I tell you its date?" "Do," she answered, "but say it in a whisper." "1803!" She lifted her hands and looked unutterable things.' Even in her prime she was never

good-looking, but owed her success to wit and vivacity which never flagged. She even managed to score over her formidable countryman, John Wilson Croker, who had furiously attacked one of her novels in the *Quarterly*, by caricaturing him in her next.

In 1837 Lord Melbourne granted her a pension for services to literature, and she immediately proceeded to do what she had so often censured others for doing; she left Ireland for London. She delighted to crowd as many people as possible, of all ranks and conditions, into her two smallish rooms, controlling her guests with a long green fan. The crush had a levelling effect on social distinctions and was her form of snobbery.

Yet another Irish hostess was the redoubtable old Lady Cork, at this time over ninety years old and generally referred to as 'Corky'. As a girl she had known Dr. Johnson, who once crushed her in argument by saying: 'Dearest, you're a dunce.' But subsequently he made ample amends: 'Madam, if I had believed it, I certainly should not have said so,' he replied to her remonstrances. In her old age the painter Leslie described her as 'very old, infirm and diminutive, dressed all in white, with a white bonnet which she always wore at table'. A great feature of her household was 'her boy page, in a fantastical green livery, with a cap and high plume of black feathers', but the uniform was varied according to his mistress's decidedly eccentric fancies. 'The old lady, who was a lion-hunter in her youth, is as much one now as ever!'

In 1836 Lady Cork's household suffered a great bereavement in the death of her famous macaw, whose history Lady Morgan had written in the *Memoirs of a Macaw*. His mistress writes to his biographer:

‘Dear Lady Morgan,

Your old friend departed this life a few days ago; he is buried in my garden, and his merits well deserve an epitaph from your pen. He committed but one crime, and only made a bit of an assault on George the Fourth’s stocking. That was an offence merely; the *crime* was running away with a piece out of Lady Darlington’s leg. I have been ill with the *tic*, but am better now, and just going out of town for the holidays. . . . I am more stupid than ever—only pick a little bit of dinner and drink a little drop of tea. I have neither vocals nor wit going on *chez moi*. Don’t forget that I am ninety years old, and was, and am, and shall be to the end,

Your ever affectionate

M. CORK & ORRERY.’

Tom Moore was a great favourite with Lady Cork, but she was also susceptible to new talent, if we may believe the young Disraeli’s account of her admiration for himself:

‘A good story! On Monday I think, Lady Sykes was at Lady Cork’s and Lord Carrington paid her a visit.

‘*Lady C*: Do you know young Disraeli?

‘*Lord C*: Hem! Why? Eh?

‘*Lady C*: Why, he’s your neighbour, isn’t he, eh?

‘*Lord C*: His father is.

‘*Lady C*: I know that. His father is one of my dearest friends. I dote on the Disraelis.

‘*Lord C*: The young man’s a very extraordinary person. The father I like: he is very quiet and respectable.

‘*Lady C*: Why do you think the young man extraordinary? I should not think that *you* could taste him.

‘*Lord C*: He is a great agitator. Not that he troubles

us much now. He is never among us now. I believe he has gone abroad again.

'*Lady C: Literatum.* You old fool! Why he sent me this book this morning. You need not look at it; you can't understand it. It is the finest book ever written. Gone abroad, indeed! Why he is the best *ton* in London! There is not a party that goes down without him. The Duchess of Hamilton says there is nothing like. Lady Lonsdale would give her head and shoulders for him. He would not dine at your house if you were to ask him. He does not care for people because they are lords; he must have fashion or beauty or wit or something: and you are a very good sort of a person, but you are nothing more.

'The old lord took it very good-humouredly and laughed. Lady Cork has read every line of the new book. I don't doubt the sincerity of her admiration, for she has laid out 17s. for it in crimson velvet and her maid is binding it. . . .'

In Curzon Street the Miss Berrys were as great a link with the past as Lady Cork, though not as old. The light over their door indicating that they were at home, was watched for by a crowd of friends both old and young. It was said of them that 'they had been running about Europe since the days of Louis Quatorze'; as intimate friends of Horace Walpole they had met most of the celebrities of the late eighteenth century and some of an even earlier date, all except Dr. Johnson, whom they had refused to meet, in a way perhaps more remarkable than to have met him. They were always ready to welcome new talent, and Macaulay, Thackeray and Monckton Milnes were all firm friends. 'A very few years since', Thackeray said in one of his lectures on 'The

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Four Georges', 'I knew familiarly a lady, who had been asked in marriage by Horace Walpole, who had been patted on the head by George III. This lady had knocked at Johnson's door; had been intimate with Fox, the beautiful Georgiana of Devonshire, and that brilliant whig society of the reign of George III; had known the Duchess of Queensberry, the patroness of Gay and Prior, the admired young beauty of the Court of Queen Anne. I often thought as I took my kind old friend's hand, how with it I held on to the old society of wits and men of the world. I could travel back for seven score years of time—have glimpses of Brummel, Selwyn, Chesterfield, and the men of pleasure; of Walpole and Conway; of Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith; of North, Chatham, Newcastle; of the fair maids of honour of George II's Court; of the German retainers of George I's; where Addison was Secretary of State; where Dick Steele held a place; whither the great Marlborough came with his fiery spouse; when Pope, and Swift, and Bolingbroke yet lived and wrote.'

Another social centre, where the host had long memories, was the famous little house in St. James's Place, where Samuel Rogers, whose literary achievements had long obliterated his city connection, entertained at his famous breakfasts all the social and literary celebrities he could find. Sydney Smith, his rival wit, was a frequent guest, and once declined an invitation to another breakfast by saying that having begun to breakfast with Rogers years ago, he must continue unless he ceased to be invited, but being an old gentleman, he could not undertake any more alliances of the sort.

Macaulay has described the two wits as he first saw them at Holland House:

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‘Nothing can present a more striking contrast to his (Sydney’s) rapid, loud, laughing utterance and his rector-like amplitude and rubicundity, than the slow, slow, emphatic one and the corpse-like face of Rogers.’

In their verbal encounters Sydney Smith’s inexhaustible flow of fun usually won the day. Their humour was as different as their manner and appearance. Sydney Smith’s spontaneous, genial and full of oddities, Rogers’ quiet and sardonic. Typical of the two was their discussion of Macaulay, whose copious conversation was a constant source of amusement to his friends. Was he better to hear or to read? Rogers thought the former, because you need not listen, but Sydney Smith said: ‘Oh, I’m for the latter, because you can’t dog’s-ear or interline him and put him on the shelf whilst he’s talking.’

Miss Rogers, sister of the poet, who lived in Regent’s Park, also gave breakfasts, ‘a sort of imitation and not a bad one either of her brother’s in St. James’s’, wrote the American diarist Ticknor, after a visit there in 1838.

A breakfast enthusiast of the younger generation was Richard Monckton Milnes, at this time just starting on his social career, but already decorated with a number of characteristic nicknames. ‘London Assurance’ and ‘In-I-go Jones’ (referring to the exploits of the Boy Jones then penetrating into Buckingham Palace regardless of sentries or servants) indicate an easy sociability acquired abroad but rather startling in formal English life. ‘Cool of the Evening’ was supposed to have originated with Sydney Smith, one stifling hot night at Holland House, when the spirits of the company flagged till revived by the opportune appearance of young Milnes. Such was his gregariousness that when his sister was

asked whether the murderer of the moment had really been executed that morning, she replied: 'I hope so, or Richard will be having him to breakfast next Thursday.'

Here is his portrait from *Tancred*:

'Mr. Vavasour's breakfasts were renowned. Whatever your crowd, class or merit—one might almost add, your character—you were a welcome guest at his matutinal meal, provided you were celebrated. That qualification, however, was rigidly enforced. Individuals met at his hospitable house who had never met before, but who for years had been cherishing in solitude mutual detestation with all the irritable exaggeration of the literary character. He prided himself on figuring as the social medium by which rival reputations became acquainted, and paid each other in his presence the compliments which veiled their ineffable disgust. All this was very well in the Albany, and only funny; but when he collected his menageries at his ancestral hall in a distant county, the sport sometimes became tragic . . . Vavasour liked to know everybody who was known, and to see everything which ought to be seen. His life was a gyration of energetic curiosity, an insatiable whirl of social celebrity. There was not a congregation of sages and philosophers in any part of Europe which he did not attend as a brother. He was present at the camp of Kalisch in his Yeomanry uniform, and assisted at the festivals of Barcelona in an Andalusian jacket. He was everywhere and at everything; he had gone down in a diving bell, gone up in a balloon. As for his acquaintances, he was welcomed in every land; his universal sympathies seemed omnipotent. Emperor and King, Jacobin and Carbonari, alike cherished him. He was the steward of Polish balls, and the vindicator of Russian

humanity; he dined with Louis Philippe and gave dinners to Louis Blanc.'

Such varied company could only be met with elsewhere at one great house, which during its brief social heyday, was perhaps the most famous in all London—Gore House, under Lady Blessington and the 'Phœbus Apollo of Dandies', Count d'Orsay. This house stood on the site of the Albert Hall, one of a chain of great houses standing in their own spacious grounds, in what was almost country. It had once been famous as the home of Wilberforce. Lady Blessington moved here from Seamore Place in 1836, bringing with her the same society that had frequented her old house and adding fresh recruits, till it became even more mixed and brilliant than before. She was herself excluded from the best society because of a not entirely blameless past and persistent gossip about her relationship with d'Orsay, her stepson-in-law. His wife, only legitimate daughter of Lord Blessington, had been forced into the marriage at an early age by her father, for no apparent reason except that he wanted to make the handsome young French Count his heir. She had taken the earliest opportunity of leaving her husband and stepmother, who continued a more or less joint establishment together. This situation, following on Lady Blessington's previous reputation, caused them both to be ostracised by the society hostesses. The social code of the time, however, distinguished sharply between men and women, so that although it would have been unusual for a lady in good society to visit Lady Blessington, men of whatever social position could do so without comment. Provided she confined herself to a predominantly masculine society, she was free to exercise her social gifts to the full.

How great these gifts were, we can judge from the people she gathered round her. The literary world, never too careful of its reputation, gave her reunions a touch of Bohemianism, especially since she welcomed the lesser lights as cordially as the greater. Lady Blessington was herself a writer and edited various Annuals; her *Conversations with Lord Byron* had enabled her to get her own back on some of the great ladies by reporting the poet's candid opinion of them, sufficiently piquant to make the book's reputation. Besides being notorious, she was a famous beauty and possessed a truly Irish bonhomie and tact, which enabled her to set all her guests at their ease, and show off her lions without letting them bite each other. At her side was the most fashionable young man of the day as far as masculine society went, the hero of the clubs and the model of every dandy. Although d'Orsay does not seem to have been specially witty in an age of wits, he had an inexhaustible flow of gaiety and good spirits, which stimulated his guests.

A curious illustration of Lady Blessington's equivocal social position is the attitude of that rather sanctimonious literary couple, the S. C. Halls; whilst Mrs. S. C. Hall could only permit herself to visit her friend and benefactor in the afternoons, Mr. S. C. Hall could apparently attend the evening receptions quite safely.

Greville (who for some reason disliked Lady Blessington), describes 'that strange sort of omnium gatherum party which is to be met with nowhere else, and which for that reason alone is curious. . . . Lady Blessington's existence is a curiosity, and her house and society have at least the merit of being singular, though the latter is not so agreeable as from its composition it ought to be.

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There is no end to the men of consequence and distinction in the world who go there occasionally—Brougham, Lyndhurst, Abinger, Canterbury, Durham, and many others; all the *minor poets, literati*, and journalists without exception, together with some of the highest pretensions. Moore is a sort of friend of hers; she *has been* very intimate with Byron, and *is* with Walter Savage Landor. Her house is furnished with a luxury and splendour not to be surpassed; her dinners are frequent and good; and d'Orsay does the honours with a frankness and cordiality which are very successful; but all this does not make society in the real meaning of the term. . . . There is a vast deal of coming and going, and eating and drinking, and a corresponding amount of noise, but little or no conversation, discussion, or easy quiet interchange of ideas and opinions, no regular social foundation of men of intellectual or literary calibre ensuring a perennial flow of conversation and which, if it existed, would derive strength and assistance from the light superstructure of occasional visitors.'

Other people, however, must have found her parties more satisfactory or they would not have continued to frequent them so assiduously. A list of the people mentioned as attending from time to time would include most of the famous names in literature, art, music, and the drama, even in politics, and, of course, among them many lesser known ones. On this very evening of which Greville complains, there were present Lord Durham, the Prince Louis Napoleon, who owing to his notorious delight in intrigue found it hard to get himself received in English society, the ex-Governor of Canada, very much in the news owing to the rebellion, the Count Alfred de Vigny, Lytton Bulwer, Forster, sub-editor of the

Examiner, Chorley, editor of the *Athenæum*, Macready, the actor, and Charles Buller, the politician. Added to these were 'a proper sprinkling of ordinary persons to mix with the celebrities', adds Greville. And there seems no reason to suppose this was an exceptional assembly.

Unlike Holland House, Gore House society was not primarily political, though as it was frequented by many of the younger left-wing politicians, such as Lord Durham, Lytton Bulwer, Tom Duncomb and Albany Fonblanque, it became a sort of Radical centre. Lady Blessington seems to have taken special pains to introduce Durham to his young supporters, and to make him like them. We hear of a meeting with Bulwer, even with the young Disraeli; whilst Albany Fonblanque, the brilliant editor of the *Examiner*, was constantly encouraged. In those days Lord Durham was expected to emerge as leader of a great Radical party and to win the favour of the young sovereign, with a view to making a clean sweep of old abuses. It is curious to think that, had he done so, Lady Blessington might have gone down to history as a great political hostess at the opening of Queen Victoria's reign. As it is, probably her greatest claim to political fame is having, in conjunction with Bulwer, launched Disraeli into society at a time when he would have found it difficult to get accepted in less tolerant circles.

If we want to know how Lady Blessington appeared to the ordinary man in the street who could not aspire to reach the social heights, we can turn to the descriptions of an American journalist, N. P. Willis, which were written for his own countrymen, then as now intensely intrigued by the doings of the British upper class, especially the more notorious sections of it:

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‘In a long library, lined alternately with splendidly bound books and mirrors, and with a deep window of the breadth of the room, opening upon the Park, I found Lady Blessington alone. The picture to my eyes as the door opened was a very lovely one; a woman of remarkable beauty, half buried in a fauteuil of yellow satin, reading by a magnificent lamp suspended from the centre of the arched ceiling; sofas, couches, ottomans and busts arranged in a rather crowded sumptuousness through the room; enamel tables, covered with expensive and elegant trifles in every corner; and a delicate white hand relieved on the back of a book, to which the eye was attracted by the blaze of its diamond rings. As the servant mentioned my name, she rose and gave me her hand very cordially; and a gentleman entering immediately after, she presented me to Count D’Orsay, the well-known Pelham of London, and certainly the most splendid specimen of a man and a well-dressed one that I had ever seen.

‘We went in to coffee and Moore . . . went glittering on with criticisms of Grisi . . . whom he thought, with the exception that her legs were too short, an incomparable creature. This introduced music very naturally, and with a great deal of difficulty he was taken to the piano. My letter is getting long, and I have no time to describe his singing. It is well known, however, that its effect is only equalled by the beauty of his own words; and for one, I could have taken him into my heart with my delight. He makes no attempt at music. It is a kind of admirable recitative in which every shade of thought is syllabled and dwelt upon, and the sentiment and the song goes through your blood, warming you to the very eyelids, and starting your tears, if you have a soul or

sense in you. I have heard of women's fainting at a song of Moore's; and if the burden of it answered by chance to a secret in the bosom of the listener, I should think from its comparative effect on so old a stager as myself, that the heart would break with it.

'We all sat around the piano, and after two or three songs of Lady Blessington's choice, he rambled over the keys awhile, and sang "When I first met thee", with a pathos that beggars description. When the last word had faltered out, he rose and took Lady Blessington's hand, and was gone before a word was uttered.'

Another evening, 'Disraeli had arrived before me at Lady Blessington's, and sat in the deep window, looking out upon Hyde Park, with the last rays of daylight reflected from the gorgeous gold flowers of a splendidly embroidered waistcoat. Patent leather pumps, a white stick, with a black cord and tassel, and a quantity of chains about his neck and pockets, served to make him, even in the dim light, rather a conspicuous object. Disraeli has one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. He is lividly pale, and but for the energy of his action and the strength of his lungs, would seem a victim to consumption. His eye is as black as Erebus, and has the most mocking and lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. . . .

'His hair is as extraordinary as his taste in waistcoats. A thick, heavy mass of jet black ringlets falls over his left cheek almost to his collarless stock; while on the right it is parted and put away with the smooth carefulness of a girl's, and shines most unctuously. . . . I might as well attempt to gather up the foam of the sea as to convey an idea of the extraordinary language in which he clothed his description (of Beckford). There were, at

least, five words in every sentence that must have been very much astonished at the use they were put to, and yet no others apparently could so well have conveyed his idea. He talked like a racehorse approaching the winning-post, every muscle in action, and the utmost energy and expression flung out in every burst . . . no mystic priest of the corybantes could have worked himself up into a finer frenzy of language.

‘ . . . Nearest me sat Smith, the author of *Rejected Addresses*, a tall, handsome man, apparently fifty, with white hair and a very nobly formed head and physiognomy. His eye alone, small, and with the lids contracted into an habitual look of drollery, betrayed the bent of his genius. He held a cripple’s crutch in his hand, and, though otherwise particularly well-dressed, wore a pair of large india-rubber shoes—the penalty he was paying, doubtless, for the many good dinners he had eaten. He played rather an *aside* in the conversation, whipping in with a quiz or witticism whenever he could get an opportunity, but more a listener than a talker.

‘ . . . Towards twelve o’clock Mr. Lytton Bulwer was announced, and enter the author of *Pelham*. . . . I liked his manners extremely. He ran up to Lady Blesington with the joyous heartiness of a boy let out of school, and the “How d’ye, Bulwer?” went round as he shook hands with everybody, in the style of welcome usually given to “the best fellow in the world.” . . . Bulwer’s head is phrenologically a very fine one. His forehead retreats very much, but is very broad and well masked, and the whole air is that of decided mental superiority. His nose is aquiline. His complexion is fair, his hair profuse, curly, and of a light auburn. A more

good-natured, habitually smiling expression could hardly be imagined. . . .

'I can imagine no style of conversation calculated to be more agreeable than Bulwer's . . . his voice, like his brother's, is exceedingly lover-like and sweet. His playful tones are quite delicious, and his clear laugh is the soul of sincere and careless merriment.'

Of his hostess Willis gives this description:

'The portrait of Lady Blessington in *The Book of Beauty* is not unlike her, but it is still an unfavourable likeness. A picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence hung opposite me, taken, perhaps, at the age of eighteen, which is more like her, and as captivating a presentation of a just matured woman, full of loveliness and love, the kind of creature with whose divine sweetness the gazer's heart aches, as was ever drawn in the painter's most inspired hour. The original is no longer *dans sa première jeunesse*. Still, she looks something on the sunny side of thirty. (She was, in actual fact, forty-two.) Her person is full, but preserves all the fineness of an admirable shape; her foot is not pressed into a satin slipper, for which a Cinderella might be sought in vain; and her complexion (an unusually fair skin, with very dark hair and eyebrows) is of even a girlish delicacy and freshness. Her dress of blue satin . . . was cut low, and folded across her bosom in a way to show to advantage the round and sculpture-like curve and whiteness of a pair of exquisite shoulders, while her hair, dressed close to her head, and parted simply on her forehead with a rich *ferronnière* of turquoise, enveloped in clear outline a head with which it would be difficult to find a fault. Her features are regular, and her mouth, the most expressive of them, has a ripe fullness and freedom of play

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peculiar to the Irish physiognomy, and expressive of the most unsuspecting good humour. Add to all this a voice merry and sad by turns, but always musical, and manners of the most unpretentious elegance, yet even more remarkable for their winning kindness, and you have the prominent traits of one of the most lovely and fascinating women I have ever seen.'

ALMACK'S

'The necessity for providing regular occasions for the assembling of the miscellaneous world of fashion, led to the institution of Almack's, which died out in the advent of the new system of society, and in the fierce competition of its inexhaustible private entertainments,' wrote Disraeli, some forty years after the days he is describing. Almack's is so typical of the society that was just passing away at Queen Victoria's accession that it must be included in any survey.

Situated in King Street, St. James's, it was originally built as a club for ladies in 1764 by William Macall, who preferred to spell his name Almack, and who, in the previous year had founded Brooks'.

At first, besides dancing, Almack's also provided gambling and other social amenities like the men's clubs. From its origin it was very select, the ladies black-balling with a despotism and a capriciousness that many a masculine club might have envied.

In the early years of the nineteenth century Almack's had become merely an assembly for dancing. But its exclusiveness had grown with the years.

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It was controlled by a committee of Lady Patronesses, from whose decrees there was no appeal. By 1814 this 'Venetian Oligarchy', as Grantley Berkeley calls it, consisted of Lady Jersey, Lady Castlereagh, Princess Esterhazy, Princess Lieven, Lady Cowper, Lady Sefton and Mrs. Drummond Burrell (later Lady Willoughby D'Eresby). At this time, as Gronow says, 'getting admission to Almack's was the seventh heaven of the fashionable world.' No wonder, since of the three hundred officers of the guards, only some half-dozen obtained the *entrée*. The rules of the Lady Patronesses were rigidly enforced, Lady Jersey even refused to admit the Duke of Wellington, then at the height of his glory, because he arrived later than the prescribed hour, an echo of military discipline which is said to have much impressed him.

The grounds on which the Lady Patronesses based their decisions were extremely arbitrary: Gronow notes that 'very often persons whose rank & fortunes entitled them to the *entrée* anywhere were excluded by the cliquism of the Lady Patronesses, for the female government of Almack's was a pure despotism, and subject to all the caprices of despotic rule; it is needless to add that like every other despotism, it was not innocent of abuse'. Some years later a lady of the highest rank was refused a ticket, the Lady Patronesses replying to an indignant protest: 'Fashion not rank, is considered at Almack's.' But though rank could not always obtain an entrance, abilities, especially of a social order, sometimes could. Tom Moore was constantly there, so during his fashionable sway, was that fundamentally vulgar upstart Brummell. But probably the greatest contrast between the society accepted at Almack's and the fashionable society of today is that in the former money alone was of no ac-

count, whereas today there must be few places to which the sufficiently wealthy cannot penetrate if they wish. It must, however, be remembered that in those days of great landed families, rank and money usually went hand in hand, whilst the great merchants lived in a different world from the aristocracy, with a social life of their own.

The price of the precious ticket was remarkably cheap compared with present standards, being only 7s. 6d. excluding supper. Applicants had to make a written request, and then send for the answer, which took the form of either a voucher or a refusal with no reasons given. Of the more courteous form of refusal, we are given the following specimen, written on the applicant's card: 'Lady ——'s compliments and is very sorry, but has already been obliged to refuse fifty.' Oddly enough, however, politeness seems not to have characterised all the Lady Patronesses.

It is not surprising to learn that there was tremendous competition to get admission to Almack's, especially amongst those who had marriageable daughters, or even sons, since it set the seal of eligibility on the elect. Perhaps the neatest description of all that Almack's meant is in Luttrell's *Advice to Julia*.

*There baffled Cupid points his darts,
With surer aim at jaded hearts;
And Hymen lurking in the porch
But half conceals his lighted torch.
Hence the petitions and addresses
So humble to the Patronesses;
The messages and notes by dozens,
From their Welsh aunts and twentieth cousins,
Who hope to get their daughters in
By proving they are Founder's Kin. . . .*

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*All bow down—maids, widows, wives,
As sentenced culprits beg their lives,
As lovers count the fair one's graces,
As politicians sue for places. . . .*

*Mark how the married and the single
In yon gay group delighted mingle!
Midst diamonds blazing, tapers gleaming,
We gaze on beauty, catch the sound
Of music and of mirth around;
And discord feels her surprise ended
At Almack's, or at least suspended. . . .*

*Thus our fair sovereigns rule the ball
Thus equal are their laws for all
Yet (since no word, nor thought, nor action
Of greatness, can escape detraction,*

*Since never yet has been invented
The art to make us all contented)
A few there are, who fools or mad I call
With notions of reform quite radical
Eager to change the constitution
Of Almack's by a revolution. . . .*

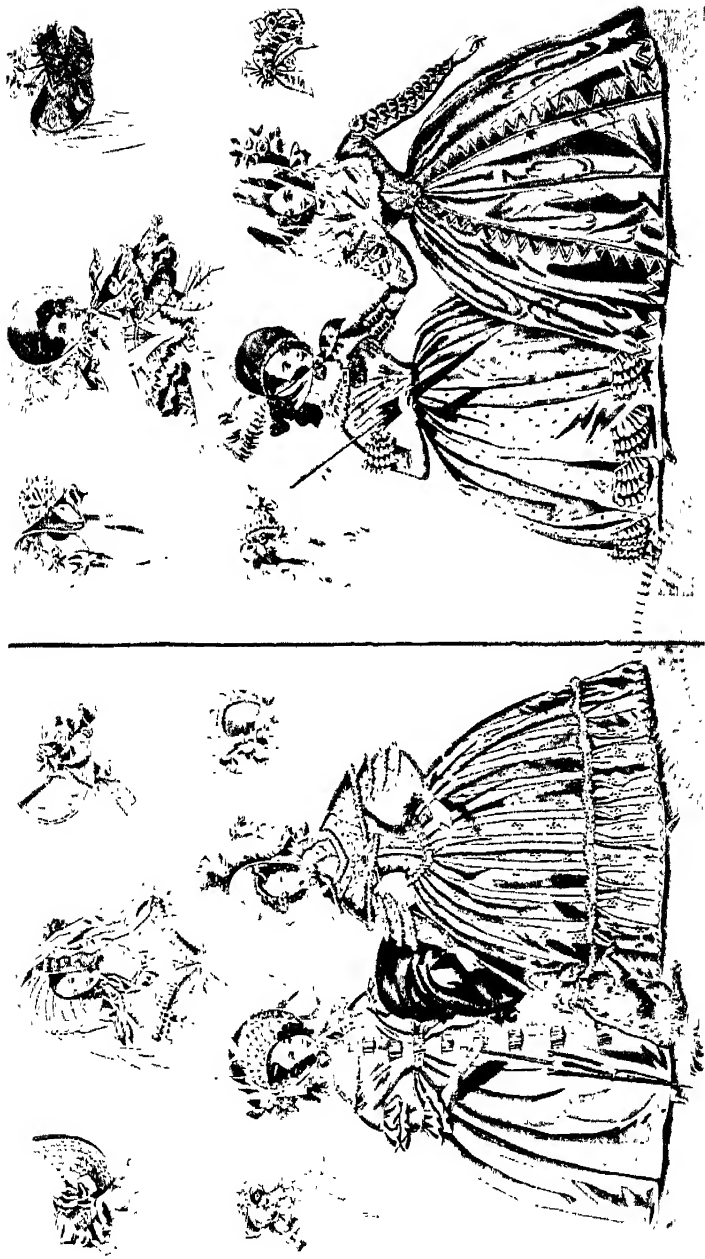
Certainly, when Queen Victoria came to the throne, the days of Almack's were numbered. In 1840 a writer in the *Quarterly* reviewing Mrs. Trollope's strictures on the *crème de la crème* of Vienna, points to the decadence of Almack's as 'a clear proof that the palmy days of exclusiveness are gone by in England. . . . Although it is obviously impossible to prevent any given number of persons from congregating and re-establishing an oligarchy, we are quite sure the attempt would be in-

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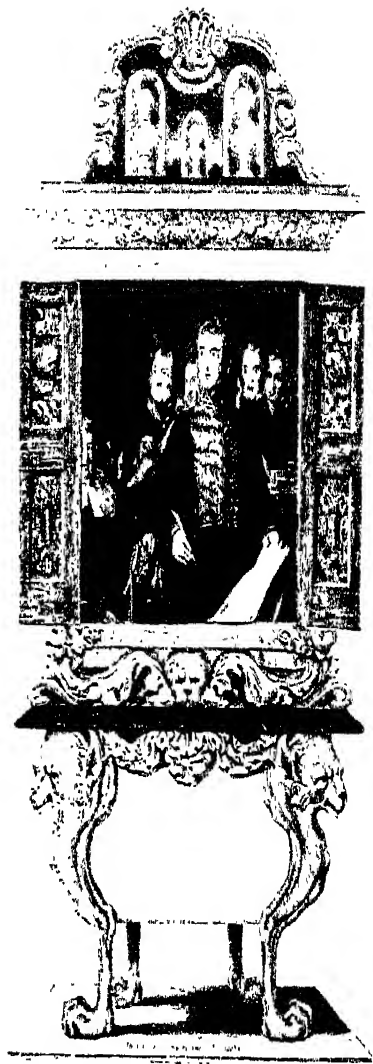
effectual, & that the sense of their importance would extend but little beyond the set.'

In the last few seasons of its authority, Almack's sparkled as gaily as ever. In 1837 the fancy dress ball which usually wound up the season was remarkably successful. Weippert's band was, as usual, employed and there were three sets of quadrilles in Grecian, Circassian and Spanish national costume. Next year was Coronation year; Johann Strauss and his famous waltz orchestra were engaged at a hundred guineas a night, and the subscription had to be raised. The Highland Ball, and the Grand Cambrian fancy dress ball for the Welsh Charity School were immensely splendid. At the latter many gentlemen wore silver leeks and the ladies wreaths of acorn and ivy leaves, emblems of the Druids. Lady Charlotte Guest, in a tall Welsh hat of black velvet and striped silk dress, carried off the palm. It is gratifying to record that for a single evening during this season, over two hundred refusals were sent out.





6. Fashions of the day from *La Belle Assemblée*



7. The Opposition and the Cabinet

On the Right is the 1841 Cabinet



III. POLITICS



OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

On November 20, 1837, Queen Victoria opened her first Parliament in person. It was a brilliantly sunny day, and immense crowds had collected to see her. The people are described as wedged ten to twelve deep from Buckingham Palace to the Horse Guards; from Charing Cross to Abingdon Street 'the broad pavement on either side exhibited one dense mass of human beings', whilst most of the houses in Parliament Street had scaffoldings in front, either let out or lent to friends by the owners. Palace Yard 'was one dense mass of cabs, coaches, carts, wagons and vehicles of every kind' which were also on hire. By noon the House of Lords was packed with Peers, and the gallery with Peeresses, some of whom had overflowed into the reporters' gallery, so that only three reporters got in at all. Peers and Peeresses were all in full dress.

After a two hour wait 'a discharge of artillery an-

nounced that Her Majesty was on her way to Parliament'; a briefer wait and then 'the thrilling tones of the trumpet proclaimed that Queen Victoria, though as yet unseen, was proceeding along the passage to her robing-room'. As the Queen entered everyone stood, and this, we are told, 'was a touching sight; it was a sublime spectacle; it was one which will never be forgotten by those whose happiness it was to witness it'.

Her Majesty having taken her place, the Commons were summoned, but 'no sooner had the door been opened' than 'you heard a patting of feet, as if it had been the hooves of some two or three score quadrupeds. . . . There were loud exclamations of "Ah! Ah!" and a stentorian utterance of other sounds, which denoted that the parties from which they proceeded had been suddenly subjected to some painful visitation. All eyes—not even excepting the eyes of her Majesty—were instantly turned towards the door. . . . Out rushed, towards the bar of the House of Lords, a torrent of Members of the Lower House, just as if the place which they had quitted had been on fire, and they were escaping for their lives.' The source of the noise was now apparent: it arose from 'the mighty struggle among the members, as to who should reach the House of Lords first, and by that means get nearest to the bar, and thereby obtain the best place for seeing and hearing. They squeezed each other, jammed each other, trod on each other's gouty toes and "punished" each other, as the professors of the pugilistic art phrase it, in every variety of form. Hence the exclamations, in some cases absolute roars.' 'One of the honourable Members for Sheffield had his shoulder dislocated in the violent competition to be first at the bar,' otherwise there was no serious injury. But 'even

after the M.P.'s were fairly in the presence of their sovereign there was a great deal of jostling and jamming of each other, which extorted sundry exclamations of pain, though such exclamations were less loud than those formerly alluded to.' 'What', wonders the writer, 'must foreign ambassadors and their ladies who were present, think of English manners, should they unhappily form their notions on the subject from the conduct on this occasion of the legislators in the Lower House? It was a rather awkward exhibition for a body of men arrogating to themselves the character of being "the first assembly in Europe".'

The Commons being quieted, the Queen was able to take the oath against Popery, 'which she did in a slow serious and audible manner', and to read the royal speech. All her hearers were impressed by her assurance, and her perfectly clear enunciation. Lady Morgan wrote enthusiastically to a friend 'It is a gorgeous, imposing, but rather theatrical *spectacle*. The young Queen's *aplomb* was truly wonderful; her voice clear and sonorous—whoever taught that young girl to read, did every justice to the development of her vocal organ and her small person seemed to dilate under the presence of her conscious greatness; for the Queen of England is, at this moment, certainly the greatest sovereign in the world, because she is the chief of a free people—what charmed me most, however, was her inexpressibly girlish laugh.'

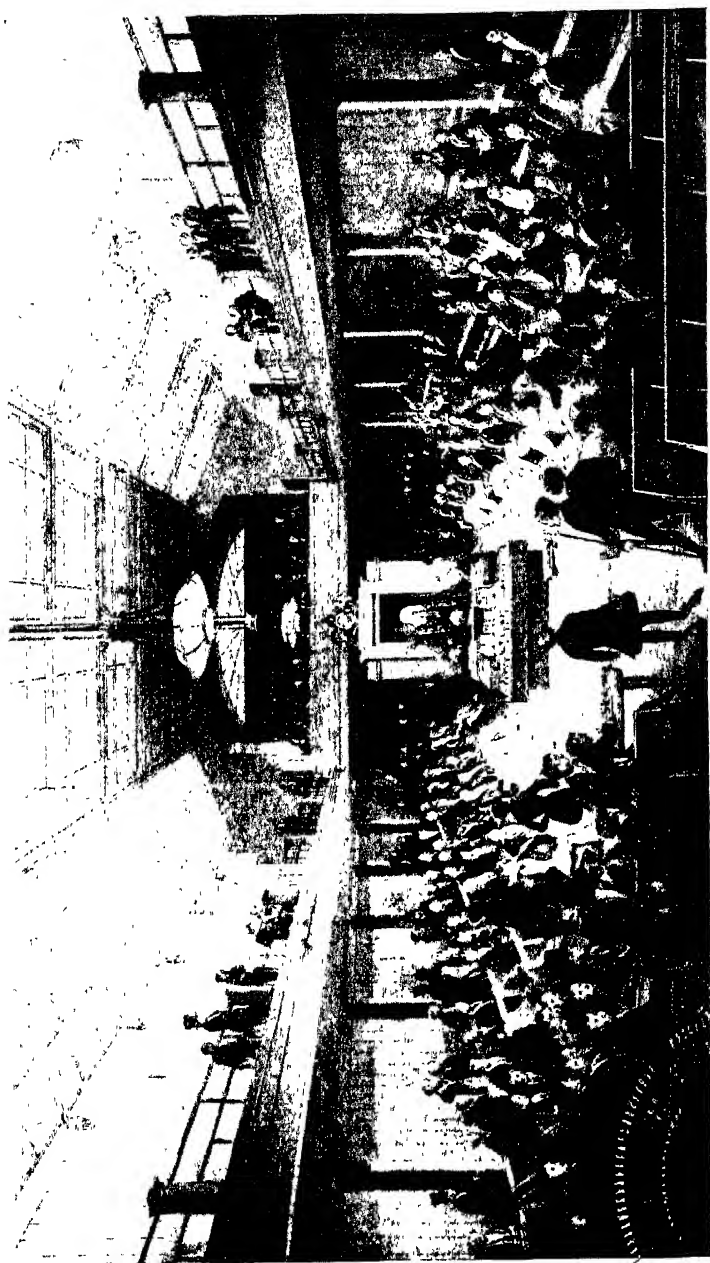
In the Press Gallery Mr. James Grant assures us that 'a specimen of more tasteful and effective elocution it has never been my good fortune to hear. Her voice is clear, and her enunciation distinct in no ordinary degree', whilst it is gratifying to learn that in speaking the

Queen's English 'nothing could be more accurate than her pronunciation; whilst the musical intonations of her voice imparted a peculiar charm to the other attributes of her elocution'. In fortunate contrast to what had gone before 'the most perfect stillness reigned throughout the place while her Majesty was reading her speech. Not a breath was to be heard: had a person unblessed with the power of vision been suddenly taken within hearing of her Majesty, while she was reading her speech, he might have remained some time under the impression that there was no one present but herself. Her self-possession was the theme of universal admiration. Nothing could have been more complete.'

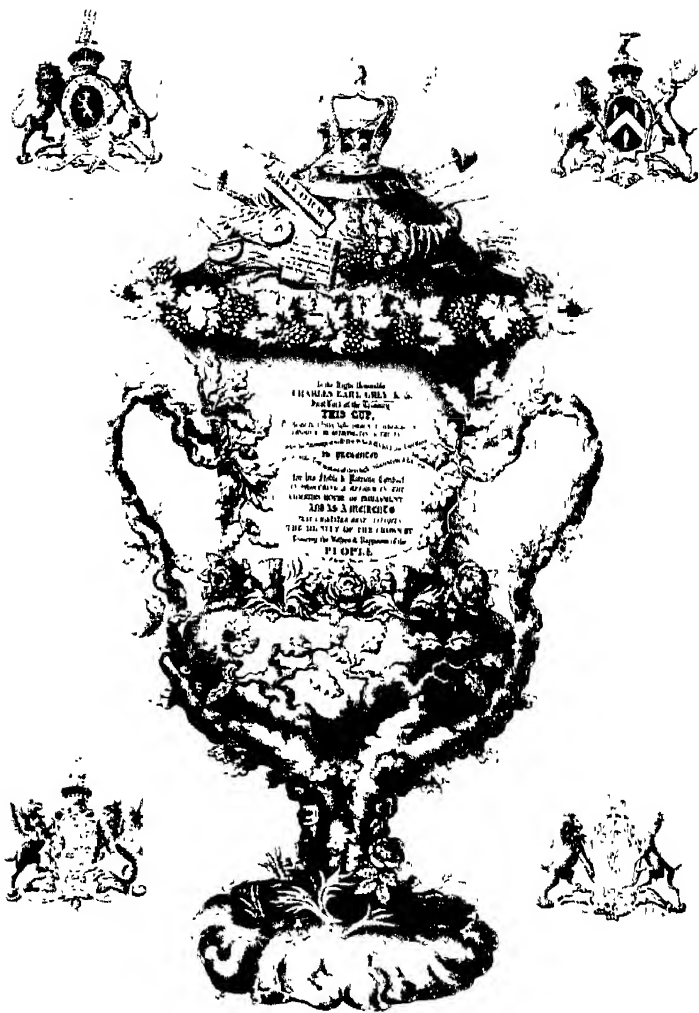
Her Majesty having left the House 'with slow and graceful steps', Mr. Grant is able to describe her appearance. 'In person her Majesty is considerably below the average height. Her figure is good; rather inclined, as far as one could judge, from seeing her in her robes of state, to the slender form. Everyone who has seen her must have been struck by her remarkably fine bust. Her complexion is clear, and has all the indications of health about it. Her features are small and partake a good deal of the Grecian cast. Her face, without being strikingly handsome, is remarkably pleasant, and is indicative of a mild and amiable disposition. She has an intelligent expression of countenance.'

IN PARLIAMENT

The Parliament which Queen Victoria opened was then sitting in temporary quarters. The old Houses had



8. The House of Commons before the Rebuilding



9. Cup presented to Lord Grey by Penny Subscription
on the passing of the Reform Bill

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been burned in 1834; designs for the new had been submitted, and a tremendous battle was raging between the partisans of Gothic and Greek.

The Accession in those days still entailed a General Election. Lord Melbourne's Whig government had come back to office, though scarcely to power, for when all calculations were made it was found that the Ministers could count on 337 and the Opposition on 321 votes.

What was it like to visit Parliament in 1837? As good a guide as any would be Mr. James Grant of the *Morning Advertiser*. From his perch in the press gallery he casts a critical eye at the leading public men, their peculiarities, and personal appearance; nor does he hesitate to pass on their abilities judgments which will not always be endorsed by posterity. Only in one respect does Mr. Grant allow himself to be blinded by partiality. He holds strong religious convictions of a particularly narrow type, so that, in describing gentlemen distinguished only for dreary bigotry, he is apt to make them appear much more important and impressive than they deserve.

In the House of Lords we find the Prime Minister, Viscount Melbourne. Mr. Grant wonders whether 'any man has attained to the same elevation, in the course of the last century and a half, of whom so little was previously heard'. Actually, as Mr. William Lamb, Lord Melbourne featured in society chiefly as husband to the tempestuous Lady Caroline, author and Byron enthusiast. Since then, however, Lord Melbourne has succeeded Lord Grey of Reform Bill fame as head of the Whig Government. If we believe Sydney Smith, Lord Melbourne is not as simple as he seems:

'Viscount Melbourne declared himself quite satisfied

with the Church as it is; but if the public had any desire to alter it, they might do as they pleased. He might have said the same thing of the monarchy or of any other of our institutions; and there is in the declaration a permissiveness and good humour which in public men has seldom been exceeded. . . .

‘But if the truth must be told, our Viscount is somewhat of an impostor. Everything about him seems to be-token careless desolation; anyone would suppose from his manner that he was playing at chuckfarthing with human happiness; that he was always at the heel of pastime; that he would giggle away the Great Charter and decide by the method of teetotum whether my Lords the Bishops should or should not retain their seats in the House of Lords. All this is the mere vanity of making us believe that he can play with kingdoms as other men can with ninepins. Instead of this lofty nebula, this miracle of moral and intellectual felicities, he is nothing more than a sensible honest man, who means to do his duty to the Sovereign and the Country; instead of being the ignorant man he pretends to be, before he meets the deputation of Tallow Chandlers in the morning, he sits up half the night talking with Thomas Young about melting and skimming and then, though he has acquired knowledge enough to work off a whole vat of prime Leicester tallow, he pretends next morning not to know the difference between a dip and a mould. In the same way, when he has been employed in reading Acts of Parliament, he would persuade you that he has been reading *Cleghorn on the Beatitudes*, or *Pickler on the Nine Different Points*. Neither can I allow to this Minister (however he may be irritated by the denial) the extreme merit of his indifference to the consequences

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of his measures. I believe him to be conscientiously alive to the good or evil that he is doing, and that his caution has more than once arrested the gigantic projects of the Lycurgus of the Lower House (Lord John Russell). I am sorry to hurt any man's feelings, and to brush away the magnificent fabric of levity and gaiety he has reared; but I accuse our Minister of honesty and diligence; I deny that he is careless or rash; he is nothing more than a man of good understanding and good principle, disguised in the eternal and somewhat wearisome affectation of a political Roué.'

After this denunciation, it is not surprising that Mr. Grant 'never heard him attempt anything that may be called refined or ingenious argument' although 'by hearing him speak on different subjects and at different times you see clearly that he is a man of considerable reading. . . . He quotes a passage from the Greeks or Romans, or from a modern author of celebrity, in the same way as common proverbs are made use of in conversation by the humbler classes of society.' 'His speeches are remarkable for their brevity.' In speaking 'he uses his right arm moderately, while he holds his hat and walking-stick—the latter he always takes with him to the House—in his left hand'. If he intends a long speech, or is inadvertently induced to launch out on one 'he lays his hat and walking-stick on the bench on which he was sitting'. At times, in spite of his lackadaisical air, he is carried away by his feelings: 'you then see his face colour; you hear him . . . repeatedly stutter; you hear his lusty knocks on the table; and you observe an excitement in his whole appearance which causes him to draw hastily backward as far as the bench will allow, and then rush forward again with equal precipitation,

till prevented from advancing further by the table of the House.'

However, 'he usually sits in an easy, careless posture, with one leg thrown over the other, and with his hat, which in the summer season is always a white one, sitting so loosely on the back of his head, that you think with every moment it will fall off.' In appearance Lord Melbourne is of medium height but 'inclining to stoutness.' 'His hair is of a dark brown colour and his complexion ruddy.' His expression 'is much more cheerful and open than the countenances of statesmen usually are'. 'His general appearance inclines to plainness and in his manners there is a simplicity approaching bluntness. No one who sees him would think that he had ever breathed the atmosphere of a Court.' He now finds himself in the difficult position of confidential adviser to the young Queen, and, in spite of the loudly-voiced misgivings of *The Times*, is acquitting himself admirably.

Lord Melbourne's predecessor in office, the veteran Lord Grey, still sometimes sits in the Lords and supports the Government, though age and ill-health prevent his taking an active part. As Mr. Grant writes, 'there is not a man in the country, on the same side of politics, nor, perhaps, on the other, who possesses the weight of character which Lord Grey does'. In appearance he 'is somewhat above the middle size, of slender form for one of his advanced age. Of late his accumulated years have given him somewhat of a crouching appearance; but he walks with a tolerably quick and firm step. His countenance . . . indicates deep thought, mingled with an expression of melancholy.' 'No one ever yet glanced his eye at the noble Earl without being struck by the dignity

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of his appearance.' His voice sounded 'soft and pleasant, and his articulation clear'—naturally a matter of interest to the Press Gallery.

Another veteran, though still in the Government in spite of ill-health, is Lord Holland. He first entered public life at the time of the French Revolution, as an ardent disciple of his uncle, Charles Fox, and has been the persistent champion of liberty ever since. 'A physiognomist', we are told, 'would at once, from the general expression of his countenance, set him down as one who is unusually cheerful, and as having a great flow of animal spirits—an impression which would be fully confirmed before he had been ten minutes in his company.' The husband of the redoubtable Lady Holland probably required these qualities. Lord Holland is tall, 'his hair is white and the crown of his head partially bald. His forehead is well developed . . . his eyes are small, clear, and of a laughing character.'

Another veteran Cabinet Minister more moderate than Lord Holland is Lord Landsdowne. As a boy he finished his education in true Whig fashion at 'that modern Athens, Edinburgh', under the redoubtable Dugald Stewart, who caused a sensation by giving special lectures on Political Economy, 'the Gospel of Mammon,' and consequently an unseemly subject to teach the young. His pupil fittingly became Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 'All the Talents' Ministry of 1806, and was confidently expected to become a Prime Minister, but failed to fulfil his early promise. He is now a Nestor among the Whigs, 'the most distinguished of the great aristocrats of this country, without a spot on his reputation', wrote the Princess Lieven. Mr. Grant thinks 'he has not increased the liberality of his prin-

ciples of late, and would be much more comfortable in a Cabinet of a more moderately Whiggish complexion.' In appearance, he is 'striking', though 'by no means unpleasant.'

The Royal Duke of Sussex, 'sometimes called by way of eminence the most popular member of the Royal Family,' and 'the great prop and stay of Reform Principles' is also, when health permits, an enthusiastic supporter of the Government. 'The circumstance of a brother of George the Fourth boldly avowing himself the champion of Reform at a time when Toryism was at its palmiest state and when with the very name of a Reformer was associated all that was low, disreputable and revolutionary—was one which could not fail to give the illustrious Duke a striking prominence in the country.' The Duke was a great speech-maker. 'He excels in putting obvious arguments into popular form.' Benjamin Haydon has described his 'loud, Royal and asthmatic' voice. Mr. Grant admires him immensely: 'Everyone is struck, whenever he is seen, with the personal appearance of the illustrious Duke. He is one of the tallest and stoutest of men, not merely in the House of Lords, but in the country; he is corpulent and potbellied. Neither in his appearance or manner is there anything courtly; indeed though brother of George IV and William IV . . . he has hardly ever breathed, for one little moment, the atmosphere of a court. You see dignity in his appearance but it is rather the dignity of a noble mind than that of birth.' 'There is something peculiarly "jolly" in his appearance. The word is a homely one, but I know of none so expressive of the impression that is made on everyone's mind whenever he sees his Royal Highness.'

Lord Brougham (Creevy's Old Wickedshifts) has left the Ministry, and after being absent from the debate has now returned with renewed zeal, to act the part of 'candid friend'. 'When Lord Brougham rises to speak, the stranger is so forcibly struck with his singular appearance as to be altogether inattentive to the first few sentences of his speech. His lofty forehead—his dark complexion—his prominent nose—the piercing glare of his rolling eye—the scowl of his brow—the harshness of his features generally—the uproarious condition of his dark grey hair, and his attenuated appearance altogether—cannot fail to attract the eye.' Indeed 'there is an abruptness and energy in his manner which contrasts so strongly with the conduct of other Peers, that the stranger feels for a moment quite confounded.' Symptoms of the coming storm are, during the speech of an opposition Peer, getting 'fidgetty', 'sitting with one leg over the other and his face to the bar instead of to the Woolsack', 'head drooping as if his face were half buried in his breast' and, most serious of all, giving 'a hasty scratch at the back of his head, accompanied with two or three twitches of his nose'. Lord Brougham indulges in personal vituperation to an extent which would, Mr. Grant thinks, be more suitable to the Lower House.

Son of an American portrait-painter, Lord Lyndhurst as Mr. John Copley was distinguished for extreme Radical views and great legal ability. His talents attracted the attention of the Tory Government, and the notoriously bigoted Lord Eldon proffered 'the Cheshire Cheese' (sinecure Chief Justiceship of Cheshire). Lord Lyndhurst's former friends never forgave the instantaneous conversion which followed this offer, and

featured him in their press as Rat Copley, or more simply The Rat.

Lyndhurst and Brougham are rivals and much the ablest men in the Lords. In complete contrast to Brougham, Lord Lyndhurst's 'manner is most insinuating'. 'His clear and musical voice is never raised, though it manifestly has ample compass, to anything like a loud, or indignant, or energetic tone, nor did anyone ever yet witness in him anything approaching to vehement gesture.' 'He speaks in that calm and collected tone which you might expect in one who was addressing an audience of ladies, and who was afraid of giving utterance to anything which might grate on their ears, or in the slightest degree agitate their gentle bosoms. Not even the most violent and furious attacks of his great enemy, Lord Brougham, can betray him into a loss of temper.'

By far the best known person in the Lords and probably in the country is the Duke of Wellington. He is the great pillar of the Tory Party, but as Mr. Grant points out, his distinction is due to 'his capacity as a general, not that of a statesman'. 'One of the greatest defects in the character of the Duke as a statesman is, his neither anticipating public opinion or keeping abreast with it.' But 'he has an intimate knowledge of the resources of his own party'. As a speaker the Duke is bad; 'he has a bad screeching sort of voice' and 'his enunciation is so bad, owing in some measure to the loss of his teeth, that often when at the full stretch of his voice, you do not know what particular words he is using.' However, this does not seem to matter much. At this time 'he is full of spirits and apparently in excellent health. . . . His form, for one of his years, is slender and

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remarkably erect. In clothes he appears to evince a partiality to a blue coat and light vest and trousers. They are seldom well made, but hang rather loosely on him.'

The Radicals have two prominent supporters in the Lords. Lord Radnor, the friend of Cobbett, is, for all his fifty-seven years, still 'distinguished from all other noble Lords by the ultra-liberalism of his opinions. He is the nearest approach to a perfect Radical in the House'. He is always ready to take on the whole Bench of Bishops and 'equally disregards their implied anathemas because of the alleged impiety of seeking to lay hands on the Church, and the open denunciations of perdition which are hurled at his head by Lords Winchelsea, Roden, and other peers of the same class of opinions on . . . the Protestant Establishment'.

Lord Durham, son-in-law of Lord Grey, is expected to become the first Radical Prime Minister. His return from the Embassy at St. Petersburg has fluttered the political doves; everyone is wondering whether the Government will take him in, and what will be his position under the new reign. He used to be very friendly with the Duchess of Kent, but it daily becomes more apparent that this is not a passport to success with her daughter. Mr. Grant finds Lord Durham disappointingly unlike a 'Radical of the right sort', for which is required 'a certain rudeness of manner and a boldness approaching ferocity'. Lord Durham, on the contrary, 'has a pleasing, conciliatory, modest expression . . . and nothing can be more gentlemanly than his demeanour'. It is only fair to add that his friends find him difficult and overbearing.

In the House of Commons we find Lord John Russell in charge for the Government. He is Secretary to the

Home Department. All observers agree that in outward appearance he looks anything but the leader of a great party. He is considerably undersized and has 'altogether the appearance of a person of weakly constitution'; his clothes, which are rather old-fashioned, adding to the impression of nonentity. He wears a large top hat, pulled well down over his eyes. Apart from his unprepossessing appearance, Mr. Grant says that he 'is one of the worst speakers in the House, and but for his excellent private character, his family connections and his consequent influence in the political world, would not be tolerated. There are many far better speakers, who notwithstanding their innumerable efforts to catch the Speaker's eye in the course of important debates, hardly ever succeed, or, if they do, are generally put down by the clamour of honourable members. His voice is weak and his enunciation very imperfect. He speaks in general in so low a tone as to be inaudible to more than half of the House. His style is often in bad taste, and he stammers and stutters at every fourth or fifth sentence.' Still, Mr. Grant concedes that 'when he is audible he is always clear; there is no mistaking his meaning. Generally his speeches are feeble in matter as well as in manner: but on some great occasions I have known him make very able speeches, more distinguished, however, for the clear and forcible way in which he put the arguments that would most naturally suggest themselves to a reflecting mind than for any striking or comprehensive views of the subject.'

A shrewder observer noted: 'He is not a natural orator, and labours under physical deficiencies which even a Demosthenic impulse could scarcely overcome. But he is experienced in debate, quick in reply, fertile in

resources, takes large views, and frequently compensates for a dry and hesitating manner by the expression of those noble truths that flash across the fancy and rise spontaneously to the lips of men of poetic temperament when addressing popular assemblies. If we add to this a private life of dignified repute, the accidents of his birth and rank, which can never be severed from the man, the scion of a great historic family and born, as it were, to the hereditary service of the State, it is difficult to ascertain at what period, or under what circumstances the Whig party have ever possessed, or could obtain, a more efficient leader.'

At times Lord John could be devastating. Replying to Sir Francis Burdett, a lifelong Radical who, in old age, had abruptly changed into a diehard Tory, and declared he hated the *cant* of patriotism, Lord John observed that 'If there is one thing I hate more than the *cant* of patriotism, it is the *recant* of patriotism.'

In complete contrast to Lord John Russell sits Lord Palmerston, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In person 'Lord Palmerston is tall and handsome. His face is round and of a darkish hue. His hair is black, and always exhibits proofs of the skill and attention of the *perruquier*. His clothes are in the extreme of fashion. He is very vain of his personal appearance, and is generally supposed to devote more of his time in sacrificing to the Graces than is consistent with the duties of a person who has much to do with the destinies of Europe. Hence it is that *The Times* newspaper has fastened on him the *sobriquet* of "Cupid".' But as a colleague Lord Palmerston is less satisfactory: 'The situation which he fills in the Cabinet gives him a certain degree of prominence in the eyes of the country which he certainly does not possess

in Parliament. His talents are by no means of a high order. He is very irregular in his attendance on his Parliamentary duties, and, when in the House, is by no means active in defence either of his principles or his friends. Scarcely anything calls him up except a regular attack on himself, or on the way in which the department of the public service with which he is entrusted is administered.' Mr. Grant thoroughly disapproves of Lord Palmerston; so much so that he fails to notice the force of personality which, in a few years' time, will turn 'Pam' into a popular hero.

Near Lord Palmerston sits Lord Morpeth, Chief Secretary for Ireland, equally well dressed and equally jovial. He is, however, 'a nobleman of excellent private character' and so Mr. Grant is more ready to appreciate his merits. 'He has acquired some weight and distinction in the House. . . . He is a man of a cultivated mind, especially in what is called light and elegant literature. He used to contribute to *The Keepsake* and other annuals . . . chiefly poetry', and 'written with much good taste' though unfortunately his contributions 'furnished no evidence of a strong masculine mind' and Lord Morpeth also has a habit of punning on unfortunate subjects. However, 'a few years of the wear and tear of office will improve him'.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Spring Rice, is small like Lord John Russell, but unlike him 'is somewhat of a dandy. He wears a profusion of rings on his fingers; I think I have counted, on more than one occasion, seven or eight, though I will not be positive.' 'He usually wears a green surtout and a smart black stock'; whilst like a later and more distinguished Chancellor, he is remarkable for the height of his collars. Although an

Irishman he has, as a speaker, 'a studied pompousness of manner' imitated from Sir Robert Peel. 'In his most pathetic moods, Mr. Spring Rice's voice has a nasal tone.' His speeches are much too long, especially his Budget speech, which took two hours and a half, 'being double the usual time which previous Chancellors of the Exchequer . . . were accustomed to take'. Mr. Grant opines that 'ten minutes would have been ample time for the delivery of his *exposé*'. Income Tax is, of course, still some years distant, but the Chancellor made a great sensation in his 1836 budget by lowering the duties on newspapers from sevenpence to a penny. He was strongly pressed to reduce the soap duty instead, since this 'by aiding cleanliness would promote the health and comfort of the people; the lowering of the newspaper stamp duties would tend to introduce a cheap and profligate press, one of the greatest curses that could be inflicted on humanity'. The Chancellor, however, 'entertained no apprehension of the consequences of facilitating the spread of political knowledge' and pointed out that the popular 'anxiety for political information was leading to an intensive "smuggling" of newspapers.'

Staider both in dress and manners than most of his colleagues is Mr. Poulett Thomson, President of the Board of Trade and Member for Manchester. He is 'distinguished for his Free Trade notions' in days when Free Trade is still only a theory of the political economists. Mr. Grant mentions that he is also distinguished 'by whiskers of goodly proportions' and that 'anyone who had seen him once would be sure to recognise him again'. 'He invariably speaks in a drawling melancholy sort of tone. . . . Nature I think must have intended him for the pulpit.' Actually, however, destiny intends him

to govern rebellious Canada; where by applying the same liberal principles as his friend, Lord Durham, but with better judgment, he will lay the foundations of Dominion status.

Sir John Cam Hobhouse is President of the Board of Control. As becomes the friend of Byron, he has a warm sympathy for oppressed nations, and his speech denouncing Lord Londonderry, British Ambassador to the Court of St. Petersburg, who had declared the Poles to be a set of rebels who ought at any price to be forced to submit to the autocratic Tsar Nicholas, seriously embarrassed the then Tory Government and caused even Sir Robert Peel to falter. As a politician Sir John 'is one of the most upright and straightforward men in the House . . . there is certainly none of greater liberality of opinion' in the Cabinet. In his young days 'he bordered on Radicalism, and never shrank from an open avowal of his opinions, at a time when the word Reformer was considered synonymous with everything that was low, unprincipled and degraded. He now points with proud exultation to the time when he and his friend and colleague in the representation of Westminster, Sir Francis Burdett, stood almost single-handed in St. Stephen's in the assertion of Liberal principles—and when, to use his own words, his politics were so unpopular among the upper classes that his personal friends would have passed him in St. James Street without deigning to give him a nod of recognition.' Sir John looks his part; he is dark, pale and interesting, though nowadays 'slightly inclined to corpulency'. As one would expect of an old Reformer, he is more impressive in opposition than in office; in attack he is 'full of fire and animation', but in defence, 'rather dull'.

On the front Opposition bench the most striking figure is Sir Robert Peel, late Prime Minister, and 'idol of the Tory party'. Mr. Grant describes him as 'a remarkably good looking man, rather above the usual size and finely proportioned. He is of a clear complexion, full round face and red-haired. His usual dress is a green surt-out, a light waistcoat and dark trousers. He generally displays a watch-chain on his breast with a bunch of gold seals of unusually large dimensions and great splendour. He can scarcely be called a dandy and yet . . . I hardly know a public man who dresses in better taste.' 'He is capable of undergoing great physical fatigue. I have known him remain in the House for three or four successive nights till one or two o'clock . . . taking an active part in the proceedings, and yet be in his office transacting business of the greatest moment by ten o'clock the following morning.'

Sir Robert Peel's father made an immense fortune in manufacturing cotton, and the son has inherited his capacities. He can master 'the minutest circumstance in a great question' and 'he was never yet known to bungle any measure from ignorance of business details'. As a speaker he is the best in the House, in the sense of being the most effective. He is entirely lacking in the romantic and imaginative appeal of the great orator; his chief qualities are 'his self-possession, which scarcely ever forsakes him', 'his consummate tact in adapting himself to the temper and prejudices of the House', and an unfailing supply of sonorous, if platitudinous, phrases. 'He is always fluent, even in his most extemporaneous addresses.' His speeches are interlarded with quotations, the more impressive for being so familiar. To appreciate Peel's powers it is necessary to remember his audience.

Lord John Russell aptly described it when, at the close of his life, he used to say that though in his early days there were a dozen men living who could make a better speech than any of their successors, yet 'there was not another dozen who could understand what they were saying'.

Peel spoke on a level with his audience. 'No man in the House can appeal with a tittle of the effect that he can, to the fears of his audience; and he is too good a tactician not to know that a great deal more may be accomplished by addressing in this strain an audience who have rank and property to lose, than by cold argumentative orations. Hence the staple of his principal speeches consists of a forcible and skilful exhibition of the alleged frightful consequences which will inevitably flow from the adoption of a course of policy different from what he recommends. On such occasions his appearance and manner are as solemn as if he were commissioned to stand up and proclaim that the world had come to an end. And he usually produces a corresponding effect.'

A favourite trick was 'his practice of turning his face round to his own party and his back on the Speaker, when he is urging any argument that appears to him particularly forcible, and which he thinks likely to be received by them with peculiar applause. And in most cases he is wonderfully happy in his guesses. . . . He looks his party significantly in the face and pauses for the expected cheer, which is scarcely ever refused him and which, in the great majority of cases, is given with a strength of lungs . . . that could not fail to satisfy.' Another oratorical habit was 'striking the box which lies on the table, at regular intervals, with his right hand.

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On an average, he gives it two strokes a minute; and as these are given with great force, and the box is remarkable for its acoustic properties, the sound is distinctly heard in every part of the House and considerably aids the effect.' So too does Sir Robert's command over his voice: 'He can modulate its soft and musical tones at pleasure'; when humorous 'his manner has an irresistibly comic effect', but 'he excels all men I ever knew in deep tragedy'.

In debate, Peel is in his element: 'He is remarkably dexterous' both in extricating himself and in embroiling his opponents. 'He not only advances the best arguments that can be advanced' but 'there is such an appearance of honesty and fair dealing about him' and 'he is apparently all candour and sincerity'. In a debate he tries always to speak last. 'Never was debater more acute in detecting the weak points of an adversary, nor more happy in exposing them.' 'And all this he seems to do with the greatest ease'; his extemporaneous speeches are as well constructed and as polished as though weeks had been spent on their preparation. Nor has he ever been known 'to use a single irritating word to an opponent'. His manners to both opponents and supporters are equally polite, and yet equally cool; Disraeli characterised them as 'repellent'. Certainly he takes no one into his confidence, and he strikes Mr. Grant as 'a remarkably suspicious man; he reposes but little confidence in public matters even in his most intimate political friends'; he has been known to keep his party so much in the dark that not until they heard his speech did they realise that they were expected to support a measure of which they disapproved. No wonder Mr. Grant should feel that 'Sir Robert's political character is not yet

thoroughly understood'; whilst a more distinguished Parliamentary reporter has drawn his character in 'Mr. Pecksniff'.

Sir Robert Peel's neighbour is Lord Stanley, who began his career as a Whig and is destined to be thrice Prime Minister of a Tory government. He is tall, red-headed, carelessly dressed, with a rather haughty expression. As a speaker he is rapid and impetuous, full of fire and dash, but with an unexpected facility for apt quotation; all observers remark on his delightful voice. He is at his best on the spur of the moment, and has been neatly characterised by Bulwer as:

*The brilliant chief, irregularly great,
Frank, haughty, rash, the Rupert of Debate.*

The youngest and best-dressed group in the House is undoubtedly the Radical group. At their head sits Sir William Molesworth, a young man of twenty-eight, exquisitely dressed, eyeglass dangling; his hair 'of a colour approaching to redness', 'usually long and flowing, and sometimes falls over his eyes'. 'His pronunciation is most affected. It is quite of a dandified order,' says Mr. Grant. Sir William has an income of between ten and twelve thousand a year, was expelled from Cambridge for duelling, and is part proprietor of the newly-launched Radical paper *The Westminster Review*, in which the young John Stuart Mill is expounding Benthamite doctrine. Sir William's views are extremely advanced, at least for the House of Commons; 'he goes "the whole hog" in Radicalism and presents a bold front, both to Whigs and Tories.'

Beside him sits his intimate friend, Mr. Leader, of much the same age, and similar views; not quite so

elaborately dressed but certainly looking his part of a wealthy young man with advanced opinions.

Nearby sits another 'great patron of the tailor . . . always dressed in the extreme of fashion'. This is 'the most distinguished literary man in the House' in an age of well-dressed authors, Mr. E. L. Bulwer, Member for Lincoln and author of *Pelham*, *Eugene Aram*, etc. 'His manner of speaking is very affected: the management of his voice especially so. But for this he would be a pleasant speaker. His voice, though weak, is agreeable, and he speaks with considerable fluency. His speeches are usually argumentative. You see at once that he is a person of great intellectual acquirements.' Unfortunately, literary enthusiasm must have blinded Mr. Grant, for another Parliamentary reporter mentions Mr. Bulwer's ill-fitting coat, and that he was 'knock-kneed'.

Another Radical exquisite, but less affected and more humorous than most, is 'honest Tom Duncombe', Member for Finsbury. His maiden speech gave him a great reputation, but the Greville diary has since divulged that he was 'ghosted', and only his native impudence was genuine.

In strong contrast to these young dandies sits a stout gentleman, Mr. Joseph Hume, staid in behaviour, and plain in dress as befits a political economist who keeps a sharp eye on public expenditure.

Near the Ministry, of which according to *The Times* they are the main prop, sit the Irish Members. Predominant is the big burly frame of Daniel O'Connell, a tremendous man, with hat at a jaunty angle, and broad smiling face. Mr. Grant writes that though others have greater tact and dexterity in debate, 'in point of genius none can compare with him. It ever and anon bursts

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forth with a brilliancy and effect which are quite overwhelming. You have not well recovered from the overpowering surprise and admiration caused by one of his brilliant effusions, when another flashes upon you and produces the same effect. You have no time, nor are you in a condition to weigh the force of his arguments; you are taken captive wherever the speaker chooses to lead you from beginning to end.' 'I have often heard him commence a speech in a strain of the most exquisite humour and, by a sudden transition to a deep pathos, produce the stillness of death in a place in which, but one moment before, the air was rent with shouts of laughter. His mastery over the passions is the most perfect I ever witnessed, and his oratory tells with the same effect whether he addresses the "first assembly of gentlemen in the world" or the ragged and ignorant rabble of Dublin.'

His second-in-command, Richard Lalor Shiel, entirely lacks O'Connell's imposing appearance. He is a little dark, frail-looking man, with beaky nose and thin lips; his voice is shrill and he speaks so fast that he is hard to follow, but 'in sheer beauty of elaborated diction' he has probably never been surpassed. Two sons of the great Henry Grattan form part of this group: the stolid James and the excitable Henry.

Some Members are identified with particular proposals. Every year Mr. Charles Villiers proposes that the duties on foreign corn be abolished; every year Mr. Grote proposes a secret ballot for elections; Mr. Ward would like the ratepaying clause removed from the Reform Bill. These suggestions are, of course, ignominiously rejected, and yet they have all been adopted since.

There is the usual sprinkling of single-track minds.

The dashing Mr. Grantley Berkeley would like ladies admitted to the galleries to hear the debates. Mr. Plumtre, dark, gloomy and cadaverous, keeps a wary eye on the integrity of the Sabbath, and any possible encroachments by Papists on the interests of Protestantism. 'He scarcely ever smiles. In the House I do not recollect having seen him smile at all.' The sensible Mr. Brotherton is determined to regulate the hours of the House, so that sittings shall close at half-past twelve, after which hour, according to Mr. James Grant, 'a very fair sprinkling of the remaining Members is generally to be seen stretched out on benches. Let anyone listen a few moments, and ten to one he will be convinced that they are fast locked in the arms of Morpheus, by the unmusical sounds, commonly called snores, with which his ears will be greeted.' As a reporter, Grant is all for the motion, but M.P.s will frequently hold Mr. Brotherton down by physical force rather than have a term set to their labours.

In looking round the House there are two young men in particular who attract attention. On the Government side is the lively, intelligent, humorous face of Mr. Charles Buller. 'Perhaps the most popular man in the House' notes Charles Greville; 'an admirable speaker, full of matter, lucid, never dull and generally very amusing'. Too amusing indeed, for his sense of fun is apt to hide his ability. He is soon to accompany Lord Durham on his mission to Canada and will be the real author of the famous Report; at present he writes extensively for the *Globe* newspaper, so much so that the hostile *Times* delights to 'identify him with the editorship'. Poor and ambitious, he is confidently tipped for a great future when his youthful effervescence shall

have subsided, but an early death will prevent him from fulfilling these predictions.

The other young man is, Mr. Grant tells us, 'one of the most rising young men on the Tory side of the House'. 'He is a fine-looking man. He is about the usual height and of good figure. His countenance is mild and pleasant, and has a highly intellectual expression. His eyes are clear and quick. His eyebrows are dark and rather prominent. There is not a dandy in the House but envies what Truefitt would call "his fine head of jet-black hair"'. It is always carefully parted from the crown downwards to his brow, where it is tastefully shaded. His features are small and regular, and his complexion must be a very unworthy witness if he does not possess an abundant stock of health. . . . His party expects great things from him and certainly when it is remembered that his age is only twenty-five, the success of the Parliamentary efforts he has already made justifies their expectations. He is well informed on most subjects . . . and is happy in turning his information to good account. He is ready, on all occasions which he deems fitting ones, with a speech in favour of the policy advocated by the party with whom he acts. His extemporaneous resources are ample. Few men in the House can improvise better. It does not appear to cost him an effort to speak. He is a man of very considerable talent, but has nothing approaching to genius. His abilities are much more the result of an excellent education, and of mature study, than of any prodigality on the part of Nature in the distribution of mental gifts. I have no idea that he will ever acquire the reputation of a great statesman. His views are not sufficiently profound or enlarged for that; his celebrity in the House of Commons will chiefly

depend on his readiness and dexterity as a debater, in conjunction with the excellence of his elocution, and the gracefulness of his manner when speaking. His style is polished, but has no appearance of the effect of previous preparation. He displays considerable acuteness in replying to an opponent: he is quick in the perception of anything vulnerable in the speech to which he replies, and happy in laying the weak point bare to the gaze of the House. He now and then indulges in sarcasm, which is, in most cases, very felicitous. He is plausible even when most in error. When it suits himself or his party he can apply himself with the strictest closeness to the point at issue; when to evade that point is deemed most politic, no man can wander from it more widely.

‘The ablest speech he ever made in the House, and by far the ablest on the same side of the question, was when opposing, on the 30th of March last, Sir George Strickland’s motion for the abolition of the negro apprenticeship system on the 1st August next. Mr. Gladstone, I should here observe, is himself an extensive West India planter.’

Several familiar faces are missing from this House of Commons. Mr. T. B. Macauley, who ‘could boast of a brilliant, if not very long, Parliamentary career’ and whose maiden speech ‘electrified the House’, has gone to India. Sir James Graham, once the ‘Radical Baronet’ and a drafter of the Reform Bill, but now a Tory convert, has lost his seat. So has little Mr. Roebuck, that ardent Radical, who all last Parliament was goading the timid Whigs, whilst terrifying and infuriating the Tories. But Roebuck, indefatigable champion of the Canadian rebels, in language which struck nervous friends as little short of seditious, does still sometimes appear; during the

Canadian debate he secretes himself in a corner of the Strangers' Gallery 'as if he had been a second Alexander Selkirk in some solitary isle, with his little person wrapped up as closely in his cloak as if, instead of breathing the warm atmosphere of the House of Commons, he had been exposed to the rigours of a Canadian winter'.

At first it seems as though that veteran Reformer Sir Francis Burdett were also out. But he has changed his place from the centre of the Radical group to a Tory back bench, having suddenly renounced the opinions of a lifetime. His conversion has renewed his zeal, for whereas he has hardly opened his mouth for the last three sessions, he is now 'by no means a niggard in his speeches'. His appearance has certainly not altered with his opinions, and he still looks what Lady Hester Stanhope called him twenty-five years ago, 'the beau ideal of an English gentleman'. 'In the morning he is arrayed in a handsome blue coat, with white waistcoat, light unmentionables and top boots; all so excellent a fit that no one, fastidious in matters of the toilet, could be any time in his company without wishing to know who are his "decorators"'. In the evenings he usually appears in a black suit and low shoes; and, as he promenades the floor of the House, he looks as spruce and sprightly as a Regent Street dandy.' 'Sir Francis has now all the appearance, as regards the flow of his spirits and the agility of his movements, of one in his thirtieth year; though he has seen more than twice that number of summers' suns.'

Amongst the new Members are several future celebrities. There is Richard Monckton Milnes, who will make his mark in the social and literary rather than the

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political sphere. To Lord Leveson (the future Lord Granville) falls the trying task of moving the address in reply to the Queen's first speech. Fair and boyish, almost feminine in appearance, he acquits himself admirably, whereas the seconder, a burly Scottish advocate of mature years, breaks down completely.

A maiden speech which arouses considerable anticipation is that of Mr. Disraeli, the Tory Member for Maidstone. 'His own private friends', says Mr. Grant, 'looked forward to his introduction into the House of Commons as a circumstance which would immediately be followed by his obtaining for himself an oratorical reputation equal to that enjoyed by the most popular speakers. . . . But the result differed from the anticipation.' Disraeli chose a moment when tempers were running high. The conduct of Sir Francis Burdett was under discussion, he having liberally contributed to the 'Spotiswoode Fund', which existed for the purposes of opposing Irish Catholic candidates in the election and, if they triumphed all the same, trying to get them unseated on petition. The committees of M.P.'s who judged the petitions were notoriously partial; decisions invariably followed party lines, whilst subscribers to the fund were in the position of both accusers and judges. Burdett, fiercely assailed because of his Radical antecedents, was giving as good as he got, and the Irish were in full cry.

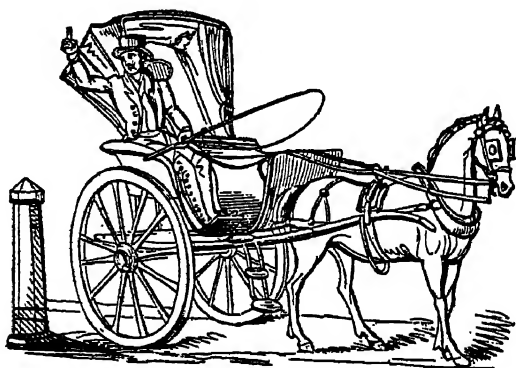
Disraeli had an old score against O'Connell to pay off, and here was an opportunity. 'Mr. Disraeli's appearance and manner were very singular,' writes Grant. 'His dress also was peculiar; it had much of a theatrical aspect. . . . His voice, too, is of a very unusual kind: it is powerful . . . but there is something peculiar in it.' 'When he rose, which he did immediately after O'Connell . . . all eyes

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were fixed on him and all ears were open to listen to his eloquence; but before he had proceeded far, he furnished a striking illustration of the hazard that attends on highly-wrought expectations. After the first few minutes he met with every possible manifestation of opposition and ridicule from the Ministerial benches and was, on the other hand, cheered in the loudest and most earnest manner by his Tory friends—even Sir Robert Peel, who very rarely cheers even the most able and accomplished speakers of his own party, cheered Mr. Disraeli with a prodigality which must have been very trying to the worthy baronet's lungs.'

'At last, losing all temper, which till now he had preserved in a wonderful manner, he paused in the midst of a sentence and, looking the Liberals indignantly in the face, raised his hands and, opening his mouth as wide as its dimensions would permit, said, in remarkably loud and almost terrific tones: "Though I sit down now, *the time will come when you will hear me*".'

'Yes, old fellow, so it will,' said Monckton Milnes, who was sitting beside him.



"Cab, Sir?"



IV. BISHOPS AND PARSONS



These were still the heydays of Erastian churchmanship. The Church of England was distinguished by a quiet worldliness, which though it did not often lead to open scandals, did not often lead to any shining virtues either.

It was still quite natural for the Archbishop of Canterbury to be enthroned by proxy, though Sydney Smith entered a protest. 'A friend of mine has suggested to me that his Grace has perhaps forgotten the oath (of his enthronement); but this cannot be, for the first Protestant in Europe of course makes a memorandum in his pocket-book of all the oaths he takes to do or to abstain. The oath, however, may be less present to the Archbishop's memory from the fact of his not having taken the oath in person, but by the medium of a gentleman sent down by the coach to take it for him—a practice which, although I believe it has long been established in the Church, surprised me . . . a proxy to

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vote if you please, a proxy to consent to the arrangements of estates, if wanted; but a proxy sent down in the Canterbury fly to take the Creator to witness that the Archbishop, detained in town by business or pleasure, will never violate that foundation of piety over which he presides—all this seems to me an act of the most extraordinary indolence ever recorded in history. . . .’ ‘If an Ecclesiastic, not a Bishop, may express any opinions on the reform of the Church, I recommend that Archbishops should take no more oaths by proxy, but as they do not wait upon the Sovereign or the Prime Minister or even any of the Cabinet, by proxy, that they should also perform all religious acts in their own persons.’

However casually the Archbishop might be placed on his throne, once there he became a most important person. He would be escorted across from Lambeth Chapel to ‘Mrs. Howley’s lodgings’ by servants bearing lighted flambeaux. Once a week he presided over a stately dinner in the great hall at Lambeth whilst ‘the domestics of the prelacy stood with swords and bag wigs, round pig and turkey and venison, to defend, as it were, the orthodox gastronome from the fierce Unitarian, the fell Baptist, and all the other famished children of Dis-sent’. A strange survival of the old tradition of archiepiscopal charity required that the guests at these feasts should be self-invited, but it seems that only the right people wrote their names in the book. If the Archbishop dined out he was treated with royal honours, and no one might leave before him.

As to the reasons which caused a bishop to be appointed, they had, as a rule, little enough bearing on practical religion. Some, like Bishop Sumner of Win-

chester, had been tutors to a great man's son, and were remembered in consequence. Gronow remarks that Dr. Keate of Eton lost himself a bishopric by his severity, he was too unpopular with his former pupils to promote him when they came into power and patronage, whereas Bishop Sumner, 'who never got a boy flogged, owed his position to his kindness to those who afterwards became public men'. Others, the 'Greek play Bishops', had won a reputation for scholarship; Dr. Blomfield of London had annotated Aeschylus, Dr. Monk of Gloucester was also 'an eminent haberdasher in points and particles'. Others again had made their reputations as controversial pamphleteers; Dr. Marsh, we are told, 'wrote a book in favour of Pitt's war', but more usually the Bishop had dealt some smart raps to those who happened not to be of the same religious opinions as his patrons or himself. It was of course possible for even a tradesman's son, if possessed of sufficient ability and docility, to reach the heights, and Sydney Smith delighted to point out how much more open to talent was the Church than the aristocracy! 'Butchers, bakers, publicans, schoolmasters, are perpetually seeing their children elevated to the mitre. Let a respectable baker drive through the city from the west end of the town, and let him cast an eye on the battlements of Northumberland House, has his little muffin-faced son the smallest chance of getting in among the Percies, enjoying a share of their luxury and splendour and of chasing the deer with hound and horn upon the Cheviot Hills? But let him drive his alum-steeped loaves a little further, till he reaches St. Paul's Churchyard, and all his thoughts are changed when he sees that beautiful fabric; it is not impossible that his little penny roll may be introduced into that splendid

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oven. Young Crumpet is sent to school—takes to his books—spends the best years of his life, as all eminent Englishmen do, in making Latin verses—knows that the *crum* in *crum-pet* is long, and the *pet* short—goes to the University—gets a prize for an Essay on the Dispersion of the Jews—takes orders—becomes a Bishop's chaplain—has a young nobleman for his pupil—publishes an useless classic, and a serious call to the unconverted—and then goes through the Elysian transitions of Prebendary, Dean, Prelate, and the long train of purple, profit and power.'

But such mountaineering required a disposition to adapt oneself to the prevailing wind, which he for one was never able to do, and so never attained his bishopric.

Once arrived a bishop, besides possessing a substantial income, had a good deal of patronage at his disposal. The See of Durham was said to be worth £40,000 a year, and the Bishop, as Prince Palatine, also exercised secular jurisdiction. Bishop Sparke at Ely had dispensed patronage so liberally amongst his own family that you were said to be able to see your way across the Fens at night by the 'little Sparkes' along the road. A 'Golden Stall' at Durham or St. Paul's was very nearly as lucrative as a good bishopric. Indeed Mr. G. W. E. Russell relates that when Bishop Sparke succeeded in getting a residential canonry for his second as well as his eldest son, he celebrated the event with a ball at the Bishop's Palace. Those desirous of knowing how the Bishop provided for his sons-in-law and grandchildren have only to consult *The Black Book*, published just after the passing of the Reform Bill, when after improving the House of Commons and the Corporations some enthusiasts also proposed to improve the Established Church.

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Yet a veteran reformer like Sydney Smith maintained that the revenues of the Church ought not to be more suitably divided, for without the big prizes there would be no inducement to enter the Church.

Yet the life of the country parson was pleasant enough. Many of them, like the Reverend Dr. Folliott, were sound scholars, though fond of the good things of the table. Then there were the sporting parsons, who were apt to be clergymen on Sundays and sportsmen the rest of the week. This type was very often a 'squarson' possessed of private means as well as a comfortable living, performing the functions of squire and on Sundays donning the ecclesiastical white neckcloth and black coat. Sometimes, of course, one half of the dual role submerged the other to such an extent that grave scandals occurred. Absenteeism, of which the worst forms had begun to be checked, sometimes left whole parishes in a stage of heathenism.

'When I began to thump the cushion of my pulpit, on first coming to Foston, as is my wont when I preach, the accumulated dust of a hundred and fifty years made such a cloud that for some minutes I lost sight of my congregation,' wrote Sydney Smith.

Even this might be preferable to what was apt to occur in remote country livings, in the days before easy travelling existed. Here drunkenness was only too common, and the babies might have to wait for baptism, or even the dead for burial, till the parson was fit to officiate.

But we have only to read Sydney Smith's account of life in a remote country living to realise how a less buoyant personality might have lapsed into living in hopeless squalor:

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‘A diner-out, a wit and a popular preacher, I was suddenly caught up by the Archbishop of York and transported to my living in Yorkshire, where there had not been a resident clergyman for a hundred and fifty years. Fresh from London, not knowing a turnip from a carrot, I was compelled to farm three hundred acres, and without capital to build a parsonage house.

‘I asked and obtained three years’ leave from the Archbishop, in order to effect an exchange if possible, and fixed myself meanwhile in a small village two miles from York, where was a fine old house of the time of Queen Elizabeth, where resided the last of the squires, with his lady, who looked as if she had walked straight out of the Ark, or had been the wife of Enoch. He was a perfect specimen of the Trullibers of old; he smoked, hunted, drank beer at his door with his grooms and dogs, and spelt over the county paper on Sundays.

‘At first he heard I was a Jacobin and a dangerous fellow, and turned aside as I passed; but at length, when he found the peace of the village undisturbed, harvests much as usual, Juno and Ponto uninjured, he first bowed, then called, and at last reached such a pitch of confidence that he used to bring the papers, that I might explain the difficult words to him; actually discovered that I had made a joke, laughed till I thought he would have died of convulsions, and ended by inviting me to see his dogs.

‘All my efforts at an exchange having failed, I asked and obtained from my friend the Archbishop another year to build in. And then I set my shoulder to the wheel in good earnest; sent for an architect; he produced plans which would have ruined me. I made him my bow: “You build for glory, Sir; I for use.” I re-

turned his plans, with five and twenty pounds, and sat down in my thinking chair; and in a few hours Mrs. Sydney and I concocted a plan which has produced what I call the model of parsonage houses.

‘I then took to horse to provide bricks and timber; was advised to make my own bricks of my own clay; of course when the kiln was opened, all bad; mounted my horse again, and in twenty-four hours had bought thousands of bricks and tons of timber. Was advised by neighbouring gentlemen to buy oxen: bought four—Tug and Lug, Haul and Crawl; but Tug and Lug took to fainting and required buckets of sal-volatile, and Haul and Crawl to lie down in the mud. So I did what I ought to have done at first—took the advice of the farmer instead of the gentleman; sold my oxen, bought a team of horses, and at last, in spite of a frost which delayed me six weeks, in spite of walls running down with wet, in spite of the advice and remonstrances of friends who predicted our death, in spite of an infant of six months who had never been out of the house, I landed my family in my new house nine months after laying the first stone, on the 20th March; and performed my promise to the letter to the Archbishop by issuing forth at midnight with a lantern to meet the last cart, which had stuck in the mud, with the cook and the cat, and fairly established them before twelve o’clock at night in the new parsonage house—a feat, taking ignorance, inexperience, and poverty into consideration, requiring, I assure you, no small degree of energy.

‘It made me a very poor man for many years, but I never repented of it, I turned schoolmaster to educate my son, as I could not afford to send him to school. Mrs. Sydney turned schoolmistress, to educate my girls, as I

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could not afford a governess. I turned farmer, as I could not let my land. A man servant was too expensive; so I caught up a little garden-girl, made like a milestone, christened her Bunch, put a napkin in her hand, and made her my butler. The girls taught her to read, Mrs. Sydney to wait, and I undertook her morals; Bunch became the best butler in the country.

‘I had little furniture, so I bought a cartload of deals; took a carpenter (who came to me for parish relief), called Jack Robinson, with a face like a full moon, into my service; established him in a barn and said “Jack, furnish my house.” You see the result!

‘At last it was suggested that a carriage was much wanted in the establishment. After diligent search, I discovered in the back settlements of a York coach-maker an ancient green chariot, supposed to have been the earliest invention of the kind. I brought it home in triumph to my admiring family. Being somewhat dilapidated, the village tailor lined it, the village blacksmith repaired it; nay, but for Mrs. Sydney’s earnest entreaties we believe the village painter would have exercised his genius upon the exterior. Each year added to its charms: it grew younger and younger, a new wheel, a new spring; I christened it the *Immortal*. It was known all over the neighbourhood. . . .

‘Added to these domestic cares, I was village parson, village doctor, village comforter, village magistrate and Edinburgh Reviewer; so you see I had not much time on my hands to regret London.’

In these days the Oxford Movement had scarcely begun to revivify the Church ceremonial. The parson still preached in a black gown; a white surplice was a sign of Dr. Pusey’s influence, and as such suspect.

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Religious fervour and the drive for social amelioration still came mainly from the Low Churchmen, the Evangelists and Dissenters. In more complacent quarters it was fashionable to jeer at 'the patent Saints of Clapham', and there is a well-known description of Lord Melbourne, himself an amateur theologian, coming away from a fervent Evangelical sermon and complaining that things had come to a pretty pass when religion was allowed to invade private life. Creevy describes how society was entertained by a spirited mimicry of the Dowager Duchess of Richmond receiving the news that her daughter intended to marry 'a Saint and a Radical!' It would, however, be a mistake to assume that because the Evangelicals were debarred by their principles from card-playing, theatre-going, dancing and similar frivolities, that their lives were one long round of austerities. On the contrary, it seems that in despising display they reached a high standard of bodily comfort.

Thackeray has described Mrs. Newcome's household:

'In Egypt itself there were not more savoury flesh-pots than at Clapham. . . . Her mansion was long the resort of the most favoured among the religious world. The most eloquent expounders, the most gifted missionaries, the most interesting converts from foreign islands were to be found at her sumptuous table, spread with the produce of her magnificent gardens . . . a great shining mahogany table, covered with grapes, pine-apples, plum cake, port wine and Madeira, and surrounded by stout men in black, with baggy white neckcloths, who took little Tommy on their knees and questioned him as to his right understanding of the place whither naughty boys were bound. . . .'

We hear from the same authority:

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'I don't know when I have been better entertained, as far as creature comforts go, than by men of very Low Church principles; and one of the very best repasts that I ever saw in my life was at Darlington, given by a Quaker.'



Standing Dishes!



V. NEWS AND VIEWS



News of a hundred years ago was not only slower in getting about, but owing to the newspaper tax it was much more expensive. Edmund Yates' experience must have been common enough: 'There was', he writes 'no penny press in those days, and the finances of the grandpaternal establishment would not run to a highly priced daily paper. The old gentleman used to console himself with the *Morning Advertiser*, which was "lent" from the adjacent Tally-ho Tavern, and came round with the early dinner beer.' Papers could also be read in the coffee houses for the price of a cup of coffee, and Disraeli has described the glowering faces surrounding the man who kept the paper everybody wanted to read. In the country villages and amongst poorer classes in the towns there was of course a high percentage of illiteracy; a well-known illustration shows the Coronation number of the *Sun* arriving in the village with only one man who could read it. Country people got their news by

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word of mouth, in the public houses on market days, or from the travelling bagmen. The peepshows at the Fairs gave them edifying details of the more notorious murders, battles and such like.

The Government was not enthusiastic about the spread of news which it identified with politics, and it restricted newspaper reading as much as possible indirectly, by stamp duties, a tax on paper and another on advertisements, much as spirits are taxed today.

Sir Charles Cowan, who worked in a paper-mill, gives an instance of the suspicion with which the spread of knowledge was regarded amongst the upper classes. 'It frequently fell to me to escort strangers, both ladies and gentlemen, through the mills at Valleyfield, and in July 1832, I was asked to perform that duty to a party of ladies, consisting of a peeress and her daughters. The latter were very polite, and had a desire to obtain information, but their mama was somewhat stiff and stately; and said little or nothing till we arrived in the large warehouse, containing many thousands of reams of paper, when, after the high honour conferred upon me of acting as *cicerone* to my illustrious visitors, this complimentary remark was addressed to me, 'Well, what a deal of mischief paper has done in the world!' No wonder this dangerous material was taxed!

Cowan also describes how an enterprising newspaper proprietor increased the size of his paper by a small fraction, which the authorities did not notice, and how this addition to each sheet enabled him to offer many more words than his rivals.

In 1836, the Government reduced the stamp duty from 4d. to 1d., but paper and advertisement duties remained. In 1837, we find some eighty-five news-



Tens Warranted Genuine as Imported.



Cheesemongery, Oils, Pickles & London Mould & Dip Candles

1st and 2nd Street, Exeter

Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland PREMIUM PLOUGH Royal Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland.



R. Gray & Sons.
(Agricultural Implement Manufacturers.)
EDDINGSTON.
W. & J. H. H. H.



papers of various sorts circulating in London, some of which are still with us. The principal London papers were then: *The Times*, *The Weekly Chronicle*, *The Morning Advertiser*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Morning Herald*, *Sun*, *Standard*, *Evening Mail*, *Globe*, *Sunday Times*, *Morning Post*, *Weekly Dispatch*, *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, *St. James's Chronicle*, *Bell's Life in London*, *Planet*, *Observer*, *London Dispatch*, *Courier*, *Examiner*, *Magnet*, *Evening Chronicle*, *Spectator* and *Athenæum*.

The list includes political papers of all parties. The heights of vituperation to which they were accustomed to rise make strange reading today. Here is *The Times* foretelling speedy ruin if the young Queen, who has scarcely been on the throne a day, is not rescued from her evil advisers by the party it supports:

‘We declare, then, that nothing has yet happened to mitigate those apprehensions, which within the last fortnight we have from day to day repressed, of evil likely to befall the new reign. . . . Subscribing to all that has been announced as to the correct and becoming manner in which Her Majesty, on this first performance of a public duty, read the declaration composed for her, and demeaned herself before the members of her Council, we are still bound to regard that declaration on the same constitutional ground which governs the construction of King’s speeches to Parliament, as merely the declaration of the Minister by whom it was framed. And who is that Minister? No other than Lord Melbourne, the Whig slave of the Radical Joseph Hume, and of the anti-Saxon Papist, O’Connell—the same Lord Melbourne who has, for these last two years or more been levying open war against, or trickily undermining, the ancient laws, the fundamental institutions, and the

Protestant monarchy of Great Britain. Has he (under the tuition of Middlesex Joseph) turned black into white? Has this Whig-Radical "Ethiopian changed his skin?"—"this leopard" of Popery "his spots"?

'The speech of yesterday was Lord Melbourne's speech, and what was its character? Why, the greater portion of it a string of commonplaces, and one part something worse, for it was a mixture of implied representations and dangerous, because indefinite, pledges.

'Lord Melbourne makes the young Queen congratulate herself on succeeding a King whose "desire to promote the amelioration of the laws and institutions of the country has rendered his name the object of general attachment and veneration"'. . .

'Now here is an assumption which involves a notorious falsehood. It is positively *untrue* that King William *desired* to promote those schemes of factions and revolutionary policy which Lord Melbourne chooses to designate by the word "ameliorations". . . .

'Queen Victoria's subjects are not deceived by a fraud so palpable, nor, unless we be much mistaken, will she remain long without herself detecting it.'

Here is *John Bull*, a Sunday paper and ultra Tory, dealing with the recently established British Association and the Zoological Society: 'Among the extensive hum-bugs which so eminently distinguish this very extraordinarily enlightened age, none, perhaps, is more glaring than the meeting of what is called the British Association for the Advancement of Science, now held annually in different parts of the Empire, at which a crowd of persons anxious only to get their names in the newspaper assist (as they call it) gentlemen who are considerably glorified by being cardinals of a conclave

of Pidcockians, dignified as a Zoological Society, their laudable exertions being devoted to the pious and Christian-like purpose of attracting all the well-bred female Sabbath breakers to see monkeys flirt and elephants wash on Sundays.' That the public liked this sort of thing is shown by the handsome profit *John Bull* made for its proprietors, even when the expenses of constant libel actions were deducted.

The newspaper scoop, or getting news ahead of its rivals, was just coming in. Fenimore Cooper was walking to a dinner party in London one evening when he heard 'one of the most appalling street-cries it was ever the misfortune of human ears to endure'. He distinguished '*Evening Courier*, great news, Duke of Wellington, *Evening Courier*', screeched intermittently 'in a tremendous cracked voice' but as he stopped to buy the paper, 'a tremendous bass voice' roared from the other side, 'Contradiction of *Evening Courier*—more facts—truth developed—contradiction—*Evening Courier*.'

Dickens, in describing his express and post-chaise experiences as a reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*, wrote, 'I have had to charge for half a dozen breakdowns in half a dozen times as many miles. I have had to charge for the damage of a greatcoat from the drippings of a blazing wax candle, in writing through the smallest hours of the night in a swift flying carriage and pair. I have had to charge for all sorts of breakages fifty times a journey, without question, such being the ordinary result of the pace we went at. I have charged for broken hats, broken luggage, broken chaises, broken harness—everything but a broken head, which is the only thing they would have grumbled to pay for!' Such was the life of the star reporter in the pre-telephone age.

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The taxes on newspapers made them prohibitive to the poor, as they were meant to do. So we find an extensive contraband going on, not so much in news as in politics. The extreme Radicals and Chartists were not deterred by fines and imprisonments from propagating their views; they simply broke the law and brought out unstamped penny papers.

Hetherington wrote in his unstamped penny *Poor Man's Guardian*, 'This is a weekly newspaper for the People, established contrary to law, to try the power of Might against Right. Defiance is our only remedy.' As Albany Fonblanque, editor of the Radical but respectable weekly *The Examiner*, pointed out, by the severe taxation 'a contraband trade has been called into existence, and cheap illicit spirit, ten times above proof' has been hawked among the working classes. The cheap publications, of whose inflammatory tendency so much is made, are the offspring of the stamp duties.'

What was in these dangerous, subversive and illegal papers? Here is a little sample from the *Poor Man's Guardian*:

*What is a Peer? A useless thing,
A costly toy to please the King,
A bauble near the Throne,
A lump of animated clay,
A gaudy pageant of the day,
An incubus—a drone.*

These papers professed rather theoretical Republican sentiments, and pointedly talked about Mr. and Mrs. William Guelph, Miss Victoria Kent and Mrs. Kent, who required to be taught their business. There were items about the lurid behaviour of autocracy in Poland

and Spain, and complaints of prosecutions and so on at home. Harmless enough it seems to us, but in those days people still remembered the French Revolution and shuddered.

To prevent this smuggled press, the Government lowered the tax and tightened up its enforcement. The consequence was that the price of papers was still too high for sales to increase, whilst the law was harder to dodge, all the more infuriating to the muzzled. When Feargus O'Connor started *The Northern Star*, the Chartist paper, he wrote: 'Reader, behold that little beauty spot, in the centre of my newspaper—the Whig beauty spot, your plague spot. That spot has cost me nearly eighty pounds in money, and nearly a thousand miles of night and day travelling.'

But if people might not have news, they might at least have untaxed knowledge. So we find a crop of little penny weeklies springing up, with the object of imparting instruction and amusement together. John Cleave, the Chartist, started his *Penny Gazette of Variety and Amusement* in 1837, and, knowing his public, gave them plenty of illustrations of the Coronation. His paper, he said, was 'one of those broadsheets to which the intellectual requirements of the millions and their appreciation that knowledge is power, gave birth'.

The Penny Gazette was supposed to be entirely non-political, but in the historical articles, the occasional woodcuts, and in many other ways, politics crept in. So they did in *Bell's Penny Dispatch*, and many others.

That the thirst for knowledge was not confined to the poorer classes, but was spread over all sections of society, we can judge from the enormous success of *Chambers's*

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Journal. This is how the editor explains his aims in his first number:

‘The grand leading principle of this paper is to take advantage of the universal appetite for instruction which at present exists; to supply to that appetite food of the best kind, and in such form and at such a price, as must suit the convenience of every man in the British dominions. Every Saturday, when the poorest labourer in the country draws his humble earnings, he shall have it in his power to purchase a meal of healthful and agreeable mental instruction: nay, every schoolboy shall be able to purchase with his pocket-money something calculated to influence his fate in life—instead of the trash upon which the grown children of the present day are wont to expend it.

‘I shall present, but not too hurriedly, papers on Literary and Scientific subjects, articles on the Formation and Arrangements of Society, observations on Education and our Scholastic Institutions, sketches on Agriculture, Gardening, Sheep-farming, the making of Roads, the Increase of Population, the Uses of Machinery—indicative of the vast improvements effected and of what still remains to be accomplished. For the express use of the poor man, I shall open a flow of information for his guidance, should he be disposed to emigrate. For the benefit of those who live among the hills and who cannot come to church, I shall give pithy passages from the great British moralists. For the recreation of those who reflect, I shall present passages from the works of Newton and Bacon, from the Encyclopædists, and other English luminaries.

‘To the ladies and gentlemen of the “old school” I shall relate innumerable amusing anecdotes, not one of which

probably they ever heard before. With the ladies of the "new school", and all my fair young countrywomen in their teens, I hope to be on agreeable terms. I will tell them what I intend to do for them: I shall make a point of giving them every week, if I can find room, a nice amusing tale either original, or selected from the best modern authors—no trash about Italian coaches and daggers and ghosts in the blue chamber, but something really good. I will also inform them of a thousand useful receipts of housewifery, calculated to make them capital wives: and perhaps I may give them new insight into sewing, painting in water-colours, drawing with pencils or chalk, or singing and improving their taste in music.'

Knowledge, no matter how abstract, was the great desideratum. Amongst the children's books we find innumerable Little Guides to this and that, to Botany, to Geology, to Forestry, to the Buildings of Westminster, and indeed to almost every conceivable subject. Parents were not behindhand, they read, besides innumerable volumes of sermons (which ran into incredible numbers of editions), the Principles of Geology, the Principal Orders of Architecture, and 'Travels' in all portions of the globe. One has only to turn over the pages of old railway guides to see how passengers liked to inspect manufactories on the route.

It seems, too, that what people read definitely influenced their conduct. Cobbett's tract on the futility of machine wrecking is said by Harriet Martineau to have been more valuable in preserving the peace than a regiment of dragoons. She herself when she set out to impress the Principles of Political Economy on the public mind, by means of tales with principles appended, found that within a few years the circulation of her works had

reached over ten thousand. They were certainly rather grim reading, informing the Poor that to strike for higher pay than the Iron Law of Wages allowed, was simply to lose what wages they were getting, and that they must keep down their numbers, lest the Supply should exceed the Demand.

Here is how the model employer, Mr. Wentworth, expounds the truths of Political Economy to the strikers' meeting (of course the strike fails):

'Keep on your strike a little longer, and the question will be of how many less shall be employed, at how much less; keep it on long enough, and the question will be entirely settled; there will be no wages for anybody. Do you understand me? . . . All that you can now do is to live as you best may upon such wages as the masters can give, keeping up your sense of respectability and your ambitions to improve your state when better times shall come. You must watch every opportunity of making some little provision against the fluctuations of our trade, contributing your money rather for your mutual relief in hard times, than for the support of strikes. You must place your children out to different occupations, choosing those which are least likely to be overstocked; and, above all, you must discourage in them the imprudent, early marriages to which are mainly owing the distresses which afflict yourselves and those which will for some time, I fear, oppress your children,' *etc., etc.*

'*Principles illustrated.* Combinations of labourers against capitalists cannot secure a permanent increase of wages unless the supply of labour falls short of the demand; in which case, strikes are usually unnecessary. Nothing can permanently affect the rate of wages which does not affect the proportion of population to capital,' *etc.*

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Here is a bird's-eye view of the world and its problems (the scene is that spot beloved of Political Economists, an almost desert island):

'Kenneth went down to the shore to gather shellfish. His appearance was usually the signal for the children who were driven away by some one of the tyrants of the neighbourhood, to come down and claim his protection....

'One of the little boys uplifted a vehement cry. "Willie has snatched my bonnet! Oh my bonnet, my bonnet! It was fuller today than it has ever been!"

"That is the very reason," cried Willie, a stout lad, who felt he could carry everything among the little ones by strength of arm. "You never had enough before to make it worth while taking them. Now I have got them I will keep them."

'Kenneth, who was the representative of justice, struggled with Willie and got back the property; but the lad vowed vengeance for his drubbing, especially against the complainant, who had henceforth no peace. All parties being left discontented, it was clearly a great evil that there had been temptation to recur to what Willie called the right of the strongest.

'One of the little girls was found hidden beneath a rock, eating all that had been collected for the family at home. Many cried "Shame", and vowed she should never again be trusted within reach of more than her own share; to which she answered that she should eat when she was hungry, and that those who had enough might supply her brothers and sisters. This child would have had a rate levied upon all the more provident, for the relief of her fellow paupers.

'Two lads, having quarrelled about the share due to one, the most hungry threw the whole back into the sea,

by way of revenge, as he declared. One would have thought he had heard of the possible though extreme case of men burning stacks because there was not enough to eat.

‘Even this reckless boy was less provoking than one party, pre-eminent in poverty and dirt, who could not be persuaded to give over their sport, happen what might. They called together whatever animals could eat shellfish, and put this food down the mouths of dogs and ponies—both of which eat fish in the islands.

‘“How can you”, said Kenneth, “bring more eaters down to the shore when we have too many already?”

‘“We must have our play,” answered they. “Ours is the age for play, as we have heard our fathers say; and we are so cold and hungry all day, that it is very hard we may not amuse ourselves when we can.”

‘There was no use pointing out to them that they were doing all they could to increase their own hunger; they only answered that they would have their sport as long as they could get it, and immediately whistled for more dogs.

‘To judge by their acts, these children did not perceive that though they could not determine the quantity of fish which should be within reach, it was their fault that the number of eaters was needlessly increased. The half-starved multitudes of an overpeopled kingdom might take a lesson from their folly.

‘*The principles illustrated.* The increase in population is necessarily limited by the means of subsistence.

‘Since successive portions of capital yield a less and less return, and the human species produced at a constantly accelerated rate, there is a perpetual tendency to press upon the means of subsistence.

‘The ultimate checks by which population is kept down to the means of subsistence are vice and misery.

‘Since the ends of life are virtue and happiness, these methods ought to be superseded by the milder methods which exist within men’s reach.

‘These evils may be delayed by promoting the increase of capital. . . . By rendering property secure, expenditure frugal and production easy,’ *etc.*, *etc.*

Unfortunately, knowledge imperfectly apprehended sometimes had the wrong results. This is what happened to the Reverend Doctor Folliott’s cook in Peacock’s *Crotchet Castle*. (The tract in question is evidently one by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, in which the ‘learned friend’, Lord Brougham, was a moving spirit. It is gratifying to know after Dr. Folliott’s experience, that the tracts of the Society ultimately proved too abstruse for the general public.)

“‘God bless my soul, sir!’ exclaimed the Reverend Doctor Folliott, bursting, one fine May morning, into the breakfast-room at Crotchet Castle, “I am out of all patience with this March of Mind. Here has my house been nearly burned down, by my cook taking it into her head to study hydrostatics, in a sixpenny-tract, published by the Steam Intellect Society, and written by a learned friend who is for doing all the world’s business as well as his own, and is equally well qualified to handle every branch of human knowledge. I have a great abomination of this learned friend; as author, lawyer, and politician, he is *triformis*, like Hecate: and in every one of his three forms he is *bifrons*, like Janus; the true Mr. Facing-both-ways of Vanity Fair. My cook must read his rubbish in bed; and as might naturally be expected, she dropped suddenly fast asleep, overturned the candle,

and set the curtains in a blaze. Luckily, the footman went into the room at the moment, in time to tear down the curtains and throw them into the chimney, and a pitcher of water on her nightcap extinguished her wick. She is a greasy subject, and would have burned like a short mould."

"The reverend gentleman exhaled his grievance without looking to the right or to the left; at length, turning on his pivot, he perceived that the room was full of company, consisting of young Crotchet and some visitors whom he had brought from London. The Reverend Doctor Folliott was introduced to Mr. MacQuedy, the economist; Mr. Skionar, the transcendental poet; Mr. Firedamp, the meteorologist; and Lord Bossnowl, son of the Earl of Foolincourt, and member for the borough of Rogueingrain."

The spirit of enquiry was very much abroad and had even affected the Government. Peacock never tired of poking fun at the passion of setting up committees of enquiry, which animated the young Radicals. Here is Dr. Folliott's encounter with the Charity Commissioners.

"The Charity Commissioners!" exclaimed the reverend gentleman. "Who on earth are they?"

"The messenger could not inform him, and the reverend gentleman took his hat and stick, and proceeded to the inn.

"On entering the best parlour, he saw three well-dressed and bulky gentlemen sitting at a table, and a fourth officiating as clerk, with an open book before him, and a pen in his hand. The churchwardens, who had been also summoned, were already in attendance.

"The chief commissioner politely requested the rever-

end Doctor Folliott to be seated; and after the usual meteorological preliminaries had been settled by a resolution, *nem. con.*, that it was a fine day but very hot, the chief commissioner stated, that in virtue of the commission of Parliament, which they had the honour to hold, they were now to enquire into the state of the public charities of this village.

'The Rev. Dr. Folliott: The state of the public charities, sir, is exceedingly simple. There are none. The charities here are all private, and so private, that I for one know nothing of them.

'First Commissioner: We have been informed, sir, that there is an annual rent charged on the land of Hautbois, for the endowment and repair of an almshouse.

'The Rev. Dr. Folliott: Hautbois! Hautbois!

'First Commissioner: The manorial farm of Hautbois, now occupied by Farmer Seedling, is charged with the endowment and maintenance of an almshouse.

'The Rev. Dr. Folliott (to the Churchwarden): How is this, Mr. Bluenose?

'First Churchwarden: I really do not know, sir. What say you, Mr. Appletwig?

'Mr. Appletwig (parish-clerk and schoolmaster; an old man): I do remember, gentlemen, that there did stand at the end of the village a ruined cottage, which had once been an almshouse, which was endowed and maintained by an annual revenue of a mark and a half, or one pound sterling, charged some centuries ago on the farm of Hautbois; but the means, by the progress of time, having become inadequate to the end, the almshouse tumbled to pieces.

'First Commissioner: But this is a right which cannot

be abrogated by desuetude, and the sum of one pound per annum is still chargeable for charitable purposes on the manorial farm of Hautbois.

'The Rev. Dr. Folliott: Very well, sir.

'Mr. Appletwig: But sir, the one pound per annum is still received by the parish, but was long ago, by an unanimous vote in open vestry, given to the minister.

'The three Commissioners (una voce): The minister!!!

'First Commissioner: This is an unjustifiable proceeding!

'Second Commissioner: A misappropriation of a public fund!

'Third Commissioner: A flagrant perversion of a charitable donation!

'The Rev. Dr. Folliott: God bless my soul, gentlemen, I know nothing of this matter. How is this, Mr. Blue-nose? Do I receive this one pound per annum?

'First Churchwarden: Really, sir, I know no more about it than you do.

'Mr. Appletwig: You certainly receive it, sir. It was voted to one of your predecessors. Farmer Seedling lumps it in with his tithes.

'First Commissioner: Lumps it in, sir! Lump in a charitable donation!

'Second and Third Commissioners: Oh-oh-oh-oh-oh.

'First Commissioner: Reverend sir, and gentlemen, officers of this parish, we are under the necessity of admonishing you that this is a most improper proceeding; and you are hereby duly admonished accordingly. Make a record, Mr. Milky.

'Mr. Milky (writing): The clergyman and churchwardens of the village of Hm-m-m-m gravely admonished. Hm-m-m-m.

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'*The Rev. Dr. Folliott*: Is that all, gentlemen?

'*The Commissioners*: That is all, sir; and we wish you a good morning.

'*The Rev. Dr. Folliott*: A very good morning to you, gentlemen.

"What in the name of all that is wonderful, Mr. Blue-nose," said the Reverend Dr. Folliott, as he walked out of the inn, "what in the name of all that is wonderful can those fellows mean? They have come here in a chaise and four, to make a fuss about a pound per annum, which, after all, they leave as it was. I wonder who pays them for their trouble, and how much?"

'*Mr. Appletwig*: The public pay for it, sir. It is a job of the learned friend whom you admire so much. It makes away with public money in salaries, and private money in lawsuits, and does no particle of good to any living soul.'

But, alas, improving literature was not the only type for which there was a demand. A writer in *Fraser's Magazine* (thought to be Thackeray) purchased half-a-crown's worth of cheap knowledge in the form of penny and twopenny papers. Here is his account of some of his finds:

'Our next paper is called the *Wars of Europe*, edited by a distinguished officer of the Blues; a laudable and amusing publication. In the number before us the siege of Badajos is the "distinguished officer's" theme. . . . A rude woodcut represents a breach; an ensign waving the British flag; there is also a host of Frenchmen, in cocked hats, striving in vain against British valour. And nobly indeed, does this "distinguished officer" write. . . . But, stay, have we not read something of this in a book called *The History of the Peninsular War*, by one Napier?

'However, the hero of the Blues makes a most enter-

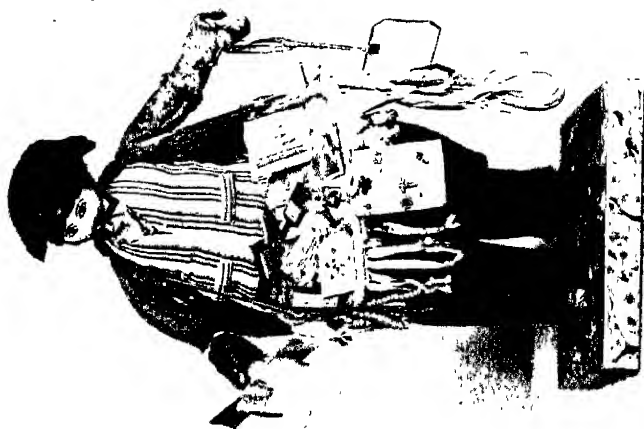
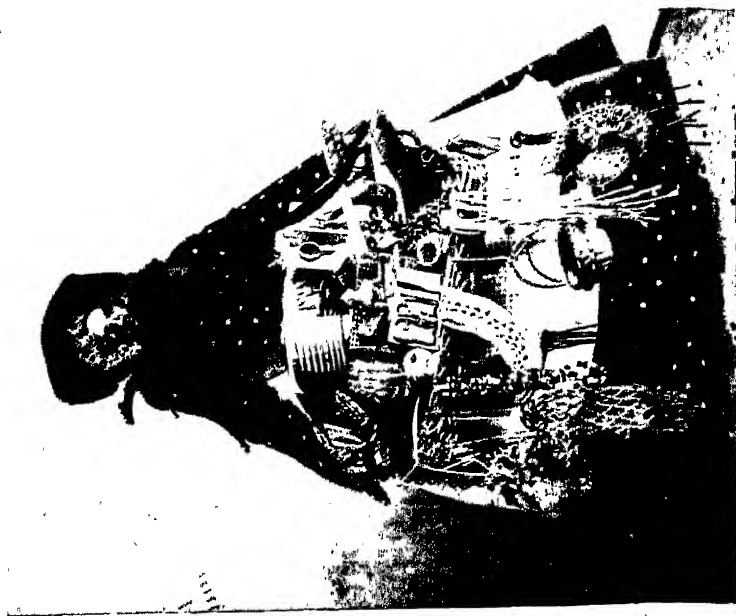
taining miscellany—the very best, we think, in our whole catalogue. The stories are taken from good books, are written in good language and tell of things which it does one good to hear of.

‘Next in the list is the *Penny Story Teller*—eight pages, a picture, and tales completed, commenced, and to be continued. “The Secret Vault”; “The Wish Fulfilled”; “The Obtuse Smoker”. If this be an original tale, the *Penny Story Teller* has a clever contributor.

‘The *Sporting Gazette* and the *Sporting World* are more aristocratic in their pretensions, being printed on a smart white paper and sold for twopence. We inclined to the latter which is not merely bigger than its rival, but has, moreover, a picture; the pet of the Fancy, the gallant Dick Curtis, stands in the front page, his shirt off, his fists doubled—worth threepence at the very least. Besides a paper about the Derby, and a host of miscellaneous matter, we have a couple of songs from a clever compiler of such ditties, Mr. A. B. C. D. E. F. W. N. Bayley, who writes . . . concerning fox-hounds and blood-hounds. [Although the poet appears never to have seen one.] . . .

‘We come next to *Oliver Twiss*, by Bos; a kind of silly copy of Boz’s admirable tale. The only amusing point of it is an advertisement by the publisher, calling upon the public to buy “Lloyd’s edition of *Oliver Twiss*, by Bos, it being the *only genuine one*.” By which we learn that there are thieves, and other thieves who steal from the first thieves. . . .’

(This sort of piracy, besides the unauthorised dramatisation of his work, was so common that Dickens considered bringing an action but was advised not to interfere, as it was such excellent advertisement.)



15. Two Pedlar Dolls with their Wares

'The *Fly* is of a graceful fantastic sarcastic caustic nature, such as the French Corsaire or Charivari. It has but four pages; a print (a most atrocious scrawl, by the way) is inserted loose between them, a couple of *diableries*, copied from the clever lithographs of Le Poitevin, figure in the first page; . . . the reader will be pleased with an extract, which shows the exquisite wit and good taste of the drivers of the *Fly*. The scene is Pimlico Palace. Our gracious Sovereign is amusing herself with her maids of honour. *Musca loquitur*:

"Her Majesty remarked that she had heard that many persons were fond of a nice place, but, for herself, she should in future endeavour to avoid an ice place. This sally put the whole of the household in a good humour; and they forthwith began to debate among themselves what they should do to amuse themselves for the rest of the day. Her Majesty set an example, which was immediately followed, by seating herself at a table, her eyes in a fine frenzy rolling, and committed the following to paper:

*That all rooks vile traitors are,
I'll quickly shew a reason,
For which I need not go far,
As they all hatch high trees on."*

.

'To drop all attempt at pleasantry, let us say that we scarcely ever have seen anything more witless and more blackguard than this *Fly*. It is inconceivably dirty, and at the same time, inexpressibly dull.

'Of the *Star of Venus*, or *Shew-up Chronicle*, we shall speak with respectful brevity—not knowing whether that interesting publication still continues to appear. It

is full of information regarding the numerous houses of evening entertainment with which London abounds, and which are called by the elegant *Star*, and other of the politest papers, "The Free and Easies." We read here of the celebrated "Barley Mow establishment, in New Gravel Lane, Shadwell", where that eminent artist, Kitchen, is now exhibiting a series of pictures—of the Wheatsheaf Tavern, and the Great Mogul rooms; all places to which entrance is to be gained for the sum of twopence, where music is nightly performed, and beer or punch may be drunk. But the best guide for those who are anxious to obtain such information, is undoubtedly the paper called the *Town*.

'The *Town* is doubly valuable, then, for it describes exactly that portion of the town of which no Christian ever heard until now. . . . Who knew before that Bag-nigge Wells had sadly fallen off in point of fashion? Who knew what were the most *select* concerts about town? The Union Saloon, High Street—the Earl of Effingham, Whitechapel—the Stingo Tavern, Ditto Street—where are they and what are they?—Sweet modest violets, blushing unseen!

'We have come to the end of our list, having striven to tell the truth concerning every one of these newspapers, though not, as we confess, in one or two instances, *the whole truth*. This *Town*, the *Penny Age*, the *Fly* and the *Shew-up Chronicle* contain a vast deal of matter we assuredly shall not describe. Suffice it to say, that ribaldry so infamous, obscenity so impudently blackguard and brazen, can hardly be conceived, and certainly never was printed until our day.

'The main point of these papers seems to be a wish to familiarise every man in London who can afford a

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penny with the doings of the gin-shops, the gambling-houses, and—houses more infamous still. The popularity of the journals, and their contents are dismal indications indeed of the social condition of the purchasers, who are to be found among all the lower classes in London. . . .

'The *Town* forms the delices of the servant-maid, who grins over the precious page along with sly John Footman; the textbook of the apprentice, who doles it out to his comrades, the hidden treasure of the charmed schoolboy, who, by this excellent medium, knows as much about town as the oldest rake in it. Blessed then, be the press, and the fruits thereof!

'Where we have one scoundrel we may count them now by hundreds of thousands. We have our penny libraries for debauchery as for other useful knowledge; and colleges like palaces for study—gin palaces, where each starving Sardanapalus may revel until he die.'



Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties



VI. COUNTRY LIFE

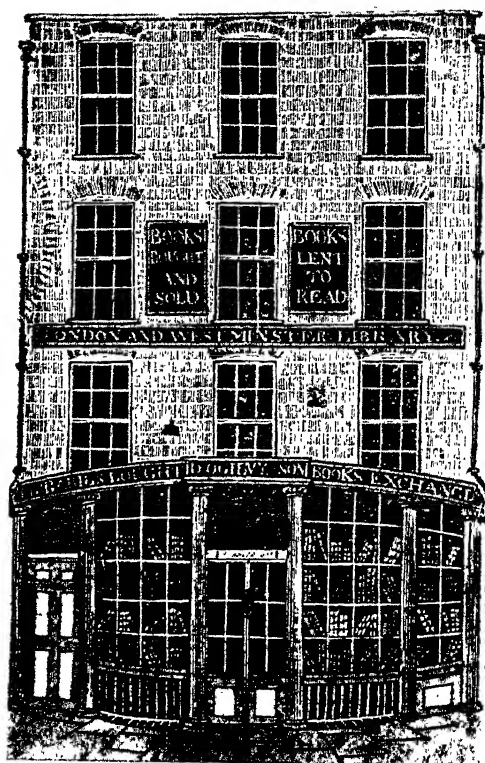


‘**L**et every man who has a sufficiency for the enjoyment of life thank heaven most fervently that he lives in this country and age,’ wrote William Howett, as he described English country life. For those who had not only a sufficiency but a superfluity it must have been remarkably pleasant. The great English country houses were still the admiration and the envy of foreign visitors. ‘Even the least of lords in the bottom of his heart thinks himself a greater man than the King of France,’ wrote that assiduous sightseer, Prince Pückler Müskau, after a tour of the great estates at the end of the 1820’s, and he points out that many a reigning German sovereign is worse lodged than an English aristocrat.

An American visitor, N. P. Willis the journalist, has given an account of his stay with the Duke of Richmond at Gordon Castle, which, says Howett, is ‘a perfect example of all such scenes’, though Mr. Willis is perhaps a little ashamed that life in a castle is so undemocratic and yet so delightful.



14. A Booth at a Toy Fair



15. Town and Country Shops

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‘The immense iron gate, surmounted by the Gordon arms; the handsome and spacious stone lodges on either side; the canonically fat porter, in white stockings and grey livery, lifting his hat as he swung open the massive portal, all bespoke the entrance to a noble residence. The road within was edged with velvet sward, and rolled to the smoothness of a terrace walk; the winding avenue lengthened away before the trees of every variety of foliage; light carriages passed me, driven by gentlemen or ladies, bound on their afternoon airing; a groom led up and down two beautiful blood-horses, prancing along with side-saddles and morocco stirrups; and keepers with hounds and terriers, gentlemen on foot, idling along the walks, and servants in different liveries, hurrying to and fro, betokened a scene of busy gaiety before me. I had hardly noticed these various circumstances, before a sudden curve in the road brought the castle into view—a vast stone pile with castellated wings, and in another moment I was at the door, where a dozen lounging and powdered menials were waiting on a party of ladies and gentlemen to their several carriages. It was the moment for the afternoon drive.

‘The last phaeton dashed away, and my chaise advanced to the door. A handsome boy, in a kind of page’s dress, immediately came to the window, addressed me by name, and informed me that his Grace was out deer-shooting, but that my room was prepared, and he was ordered to wait on me. I followed him through a hall lined with statues, deers’ horns, and armour, and was ushered into a large chamber looking out on a park, extending with its lawns and woods to the edge of the horizon. A more lovely view never feasted human eye.

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“Who is at the Castle?” I asked, as the boy busied himself in unstrapping my portmanteau. “O, a great many, sir—” he stopped in his occupation, and began counting on his fingers a long list of lords and ladies. “And how many sit down to dinner?” “Above ninety, sir, besides the Duke and Duchess.” “That will do,”—and off tripped my slender gentleman, with his laced jacket, giving the fire a terrible stir up on his way out, and turning back to inform me that the dinner hour was seven precisely.

‘It was a mild, bright afternoon, quite warm for the end of an English September, and with a fire in the room, and a soft sunshine pouring in at the windows, a seat at the open casement was far from disagreeable. . . . Hill and valley lay between my eye and the horizon; sheep fed in picturesque flocks; and small fallow deer grazed near them; the trees were planted, and the distant forest shaped by the hand of taste; and broad and beautiful as was the expanse taken in by the eye, it was evidently one princely possession. A mile from the castle wall, the shaven sward extended in a carpet of velvet softness, as bright as emerald, studded by clumps of shrubbery, like flowers wrought elegantly in tapestry; and across it bounded occasionally a hare, and the pheasants fed undisturbed near the thickets, or a lady with flowing riding dress and flaunting feather, dashed into sight upon her fleet blood palfrey and was lost the next moment in the woods, or a boy put his pony to its mettle up the ascent, or a gamekeeper idled into sight with his gun in the hollow of his arm, and his hounds at his heels. And all this little world of enjoyment and luxury and beauty lay in the hand of one man, and was created by his wealth in those northern wilds of Scotland,

a day's journey almost from the possession of another human being. I never realised so forcibly the splendid results of wealth and primogeniture.

'The sun set in a blaze of fire among the pointed firs crowning the hills; and by the occasional prance of horses' feet on the gravel, and the roll of rapid wheels and now and then a gay laugh and many voices, the different parties were returning to the Castle. Soon after, a loud gong sounded through the galleries, the signal to dress, and I left my musing occupation unwillingly to make my toilet for an appearance in a formidable circle of titled aristocrats, not one of whom I had ever seen, the Duke himself a stranger to me, except through the kind letter of invitation lying on the table.

'I was sitting by the fire, imagining forms and faces for the different persons who had been named to me, when there was a knock at the door, and a tall, white-haired gentleman, of noble physiognomy, but singularly cordial address, entered, with a broad red ribbon across his breast, and welcomed me most heartily to the Castle. The gong sounded at the next moment, and on our way down he named over his other guests, and prepared me, in a measure, for the introductions which followed. The drawing-room was crowded like a *soirée*. The Duchess, a tall and very handsome woman, with a smile of the most winning sweetness, received me at the door, and I was presented successively to every person present. Dinner was announced immediately, and the difficult question of precedence being sooner settled than I had ever seen it before in so large a party, we passed through files of servants to the dining-room. It was a large and very lofty hall, supported, at the ends, by marble columns, within which was stationed a band of

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music playing delightfully. The walls were lined with full-length family portraits, from old knights in armour to the modern dukes in kilt of the Gordon plaid; and on the sideboards stood services of gold plate, the most gorgeously massive, and the most beautiful in workmanship I have ever seen. There were, among the vases, several large coursing-cups, won by the Duke's hounds, of quite exquisite shape and ornament.

'I fell into my place between a gentleman and a very beautiful woman of, perhaps, twenty-two, neither of whose names I remembered, though I had but just been introduced. The Duke probably anticipated as much, and as I took my seat he called out to me, from the top of the table, that I had on my right Lady ——, "the most agreeable woman in Scotland". It was unnecessary to say that she was the most lovely.

'I have been struck everywhere in England with the beauty of the higher classes, and as I looked around me upon the aristocratic company at the table, I thought I had never seen "Heaven's image double-stamped as man, and noble" so unequivocally clear . . . the band ceased playing when the ladies left the table; the gentlemen closed up, conversation assumed a merrier cast, coffee and liqueurs were brought in when the wines began to be circulated more slowly, and at eleven there was a general move to the drawing-room. Cards, tea, music, filled up the time till twelve, and then the ladies took their departure, and the gentlemen sat down to supper. I got to bed somewhere about two o'clock; and thus ended an evening, which I had anticipated as stiff and embarrassing, but which is marked in my tablets as one of the most social and kindly I have had the good fortune to record on my travels.

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‘I arose late in the morning, and found the large party already assembled about the breakfast table. I was struck on entering with the different air of the room. The deep windows opening out upon the park had the effect of sombre landscapes in open frames; the troops of liveried servants, the glitter of plate, the music, that had contributed to the splendour of the scene the night before, were gone. The Duke sat laughing at the head of the table, with a newspaper in his hand, dressed in a coarse shooting-jacket and coloured cravat; the Duchess was in a plain morning dress and cap of the simplest character; and the high-born women about the table, whom I had left glittering with jewels and dressed in all the attractions of fashion, appeared in the simplest *coiffure* and a toilet of studied plainness. The ten or twelve noblemen present were engrossed with their letters or newspapers over tea and toast; and in them, perhaps, the transformation was still greater. The *soigné* man of fashion of the night before, faultless in costume and distinguished in his appearance—in the full force of the term—was enveloped now in a coat of fustian, with a coarse waistcoat of plaid and a gingham cravat, and hob-nailed boots for shooting; and in place of the gay hilarity of the supper-table, wore a face of calm indifference, and ate his breakfast, and read the paper, in a rarely broken silence. I wondered as I looked about me, what would be the impression of many people in my own country, could they look upon that plain party, aware that it was composed of the proudest nobility and the highest fashion of England.

‘Breakfast in England is a confidential and uncere-
monious hour, and servants are generally dispensed
with. This is to me, I confess, an advantage it has over

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every other meal. I detest eating with twenty tall fellows standing opposite, whose business it is to watch me. The coffee and tea were on the table, with toast, muffins and oatcakes, marmalade, jellies, fish, and all the paraphernalia of a Scotch breakfast; and on the sideboard stood cold meats for those who liked them, and they were expected to go to it and help themselves. Nothing could be more easy, unceremonious and affable than the whole tone of the meal. One after another rose and fell into groups in the windows, or walked up and down the long room, and, with one or two others, I joined the Duke at the head of the table, who gave us some interesting particulars of the salmon-fisheries of the Spey. The privilege of fishing the river within his lands is bought of him at the pretty sum of eight thousand pounds a year.

‘The ladies went off to their walks in the park and other avocations.’

Such was life in the great country houses. The yeomen farmers were equally hospitable, according to Howett, but, of course, where the Castle had guests whenever its owners were present, the farmer could only manage an entertainment once or twice a year. Here is a description of a farmhouse dinner in the days when most things still had to be made at home:

‘The farmer will have a party. Suppose it is at some period of the year when he is least busy; for his engagements depending on the progress of the seasons, and his whole health being at the mercy of the elements, he cannot postpone his duties, but must take them as they fall out. Suppose it, then, just before the commencement of hay harvest, for then he has a short pause, between the putting in of his last crop of potatoes or corn, shutting up his fields, and clearing his green-corn lands, and that

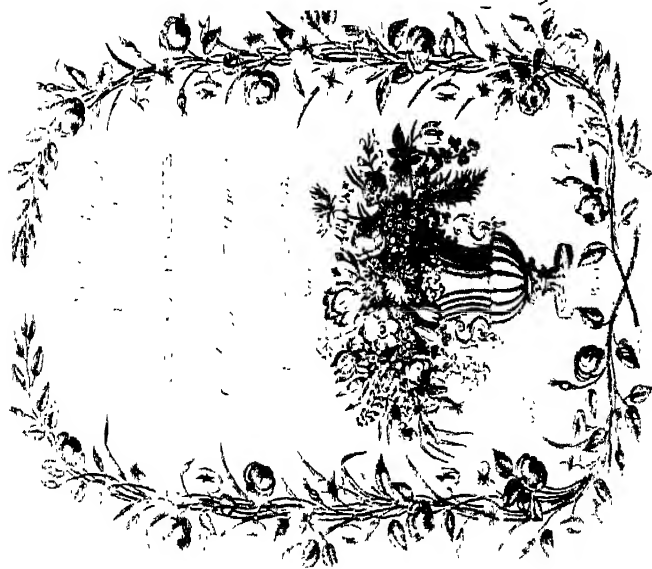
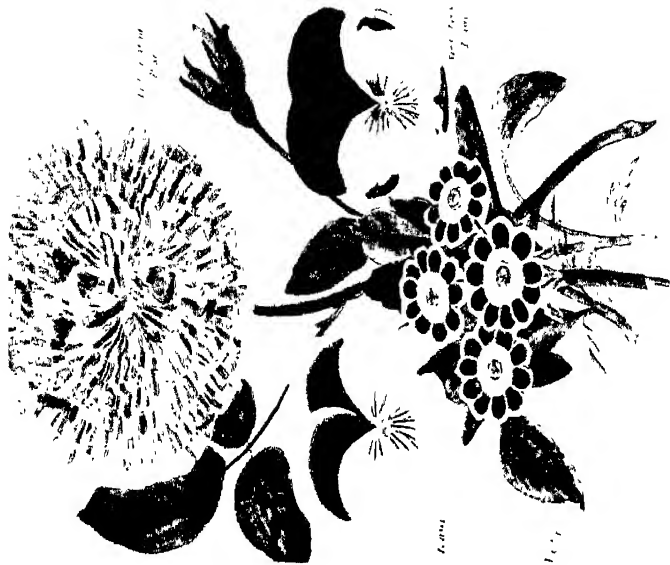
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moment when the first scythe enters his hayfields, when a course of arduous and anxious labour begins, that will not cease till all his crops are safely housed—hay, corn, beans, peas and potatoes. Suppose at this pause in the growing time of summer, or after harvest, or amid the festive days of Christmas, he feels himself comparatively at leisure, in good spirits, and disposed to enjoy himself. He and his wife arrange their plans. Invitations are sent. On market day he lays in all necessaries—tea, coffee, prime cuts of beef and other meat; wine and spirits; sugar and spices. At home there is busy preparation. His garden is cleaned up: an operation of rare occurrence with a busy farmer, who thinks so much of his fields that he thinks but little of his garden. His stables and his hayricks are put in order. The very manes and tails of his horses are trimmed, for all will have to pass under the critical notice of his friends, and he feels his professional character at stake. In the house there is equal activity. There is a world of cleaning and setting in order. Floors are scoured. The best carpets are put down. This room is found to want fresh staining; painting wants doing here and there, both within and without. Trees also want nailing and trimming on the walls; and it is probable there may want some spout repairing, or tiles renewing, that have often been talked of but never could have found time for their doing. The house and all about it look fifty per cent. the better. The neatly cleaned walks and closely mown grass plots; the brightly cleaned windows, and the scarlet curtains and the purely white blinds seen within, give an air of completeness that is very satisfactory.

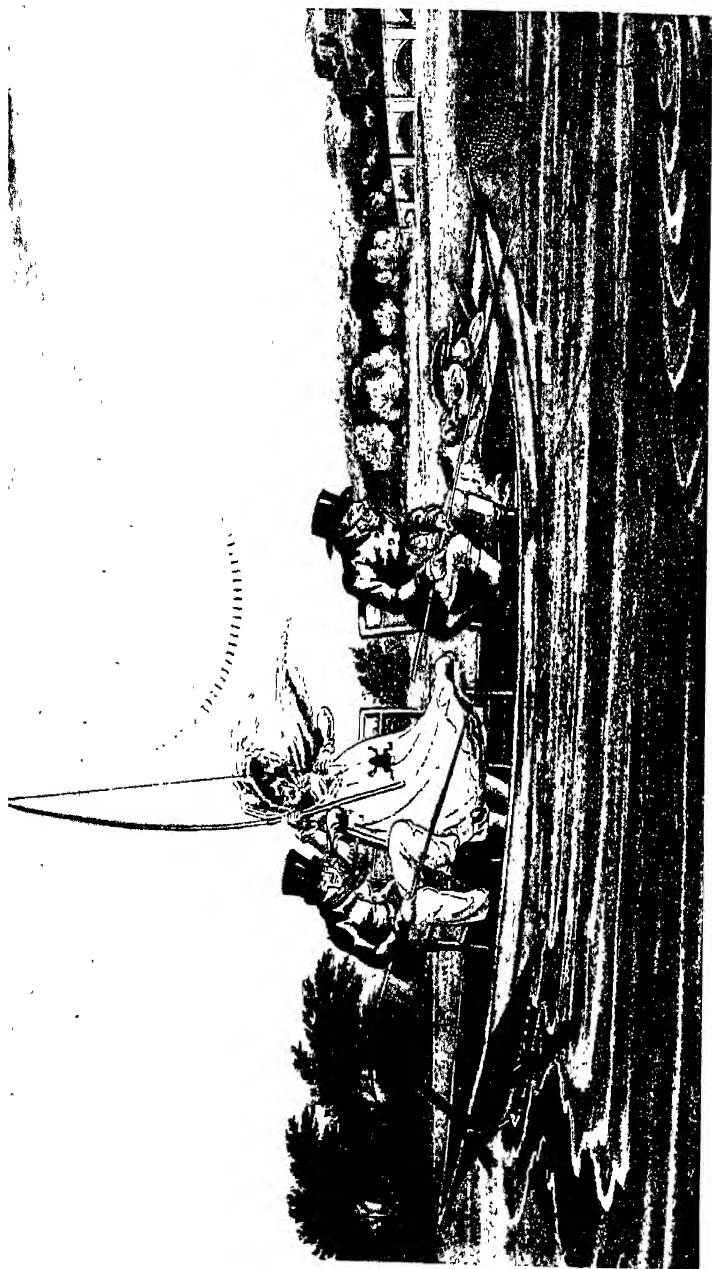
‘And then within begin the mighty preparations for the feast. Geese, turkeys, ducks and fowls are killed and

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pulled, and part are cooked and part are made ready for cooking. If the farmer shoots, and it be the season, there are hares and rabbits, pheasants and partridge, brought to the larder; if he does not, he makes friends with the keeper, who occasionally takes a social pipe and glass with him; or he makes a direct request to his landlord for this indulgence. Hams are boiled; pies are made; puddings of the richest composition are put together. If it be Christmas, loud is the chopping of meat for minced pies; busy the mixing of spices, and the washing and picking of currants and raisins; and pork pies and sausages of most savoury and approved manipulation are raised into material existence. If the sucking-pig escapes whipping—and we hope no honest farmer is now cruel enough for this operation—creams and syllabubs do not; they are whipped, not to death, but into life. There are blancmange and jellies, crystalline and fragrant; clouted creams, and cream of strawberries, raspberries, and I know not what melting and delicious things. And O! such cheese-cakes, and such patties, and such little cakes of various names and natures, for tea and entremets and dessert. I see the oven door open and shut, as the iron tray of nicely laden patty-pans goes into the oven, or comes out with a rich perfection, and with odours most delicious, most mouth-melting, most inexpressible! The good and skilful dame, and the no less skilful and comely daughters . . . what is not their depth of occupation? . . . I would fain take an easy chair in some cool corner of this milk-and-honey flowing kitchen, and watch all their sweet employment, and hear all their sweet words in a grateful silence. . . . Nuts, walnuts, apples and pears and other fruit, according as the season may be, are produced from their stores, or from



16. Florists' Flowers of the Day



17. 'Patience in a Punt'

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the sunny walls and trees . . . and placed in their proper receivers of glass or china, or possibly of plate. Wine and spirit decanters are to be washed and carefully dried, and to be charged with their bright contents. The discovery of the richest cheese in the whole cheese room is to be made by tasting; butter is to be moulded in small cakes, and imprinted with patterns of the deepest and most elegant figures, and a thousand other things made, or done, of which the tasting were to be desired rather than the catalogue particularised, for wonderful and manifold are all thy works, O thou accomplished spouse of a wealthy farmer!

‘What dainties has that greater oven received into its more capacious cavern? Bread of the most exquisite fineness; and pies of varied character—fruit, pork, beef-steak and giblet—if in Devon or Cornwall, *sweet* giblet, a pie that all England besides knows not of: figgy-bread and saffron-cake of transcendent brilliance and taste.

‘And then comes the great day! The guests are invited to dinner; but they have been enjoined to *come early*, and they come early with a vengeance. They will not come as the guests of night-loving citizens and aristocrats come, at from six to nine in the evening; no, at ten and eleven in the morning you shall see their faces that never yet were ashamed of daylight, and that tell of fresh air and early hours.

‘Then come rattling in sundry vehicles with their cargoes of men and women; lively salutations are exchanged; the horses are led away to the stables, and the guests into the house to doff their coats and cloaks, hats and bonnets, and sit down to lunch. And there it is, ready set out. “They’ll want something after their

drive," says the host; "to be sure," says the hostess; and there is plenty in truth. A boiled ham, a neat's tongue, a piece of cold beef; fowls and beef-steak pie; tarts and bread, cheese and butter; coffee for the ladies, and fine old ale for the gentlemen. . . .

'A hearty lunch is made, and the gentlemen are ready to set out and look about them. They are warned by the hostess to remember that dinner will be on table at one o'clock—"exactly at one!" and assuming hats and sticks, away they go.

'While they perambulate the farm, pass learned judgments on land, cattle and crops, and make besides excursions into neighbouring lands, to some particular experiment in management, or extraordinary production of combined art and nature, our hostess shows her female friends her dairy, her cheese room, her poultry yard; and discussions as scientific are going on on the best modes of fattening calves, rearing turkey broods, and on all the most approved manipulations of cheese and butter. The quantities produced from a certain number of cows are compared, and many wonders expressed that lands of apparent equality of richness should some yield little butter and much cheese, and others little cheese and much butter; facts well known to all such ladies, but not easy of explanation by heads that pretend to see further into the heart of a difficulty than they do. A walk is probably proposed and undertaken through the garden and orchard, and flowers and fruits are descanted on; and all this time in the house, roasting and boiling and baking are going on gloriously. Savoury steams are rolling about under the ceilings; busy damsels with faces rosier than ever, are running to and fro on the floors; stable-boys are turned into knife-

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cleaners; and plough-lads into peelers of potatoes, and watchers of boiling pots, and turnspits.

'The hour arrives, and a sound of loud voices somewhere at hand announces that our agricultural friends are returned punctually to their time, with many a joke on their fears of the ladies' tongues. Not that they seemed to want any dinner; no, they made such a lunch, but they had such a natural fear of being scolded. Well, here they all are—and here are the ladies, all in full dress. Hands that have been handling prime stock, or rooting in the earth, or thrust into hay-ricks and corn-heaps, are washed, and down they sit to such a dinner as might satisfy a crew of shipwrecked men. There are seldom any of your "wishy-washy soups" except it be very cold weather and seldom more than two courses; but they *are* courses! All of the meat kind seems set on the table at once. Off go the covers, and what a perplexing but unconsumable variety! Such pieces of roast beef, veal and lamb, such hams and turkeys and geese; such game, and pies of pigeons or other things equally good, with vegetables of all kinds in season—peas, potatoes, cauliflowers, kidney beans, lettuces, and whatsoever the season can produce. The most potent of ale and porter, the most crystalline and cool water, are freely supplied, and wine for those that will. When these things have had ample respect paid to them, they vanish, and the table is covered with plum-puddings and fruit tarts, cheese-cakes, syllabubs, and all the nicknackery of whipped creams and jellies that female invention can produce. And then a dessert of equal profusion. Why should we tantalise ourselves with the vision of all those nuts, walnuts, almonds, raisins, fruits and confections? Enough that they are there; that the wine circulates—

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foreign and English—port and sherry—gooseberry and damson—malt and birch—elderflower and cowslip—and loud is the clamour of voices, male and female. If there be not quite so much refinement of tone and manner, quite so much fastidiousness of phrase and action, as in some other places, there is at least more hearty laughter, more natural jocularly, and many a “random shot of country wit”, as Burns calls it. A vast talk there is, of all the country round; every strange circumstance; every incident and change of condition and new alliance amongst their mutual friends and acquaintances, pass under review. The ladies withdraw; and the gentlemen draw together; spirits take place of wine, and pipes are lighted. We know what subjects will interest them—farming improvements and politics—and so it goes till tea-time.

‘When summoned to tea, there are additional faces. The pastor and his wife . . . and there is the clerk too—the very model of respect and reverence towards his clerical superior. Whatever that learned authority asserts, this zealous and “dearly-beloved Moses” testifies. He calls attention to what the Vicar says; he repeats with great satisfaction his sayings. There, too, is the surgeon and often the veterinary surgeon, especially as he also is often a farmer, and in intercourse with all the farmers far and near. But the Vicar’s presence on such a day is felt. There is a more palpable approximation towards silence—a drawing tighter of the reins of conversational freedom. . . .

‘There must be a dance for the young, and there are cards for those more sedate; and then again, to a supper as profuse, with its hot game and fowls and fresh pastry, as if it had been the sole meal cooked in the house that

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day. The pastor and his company depart; the wine and spirits circulate; all begin to talk of parting, and are loth to part, till it grows late, and they have some of them six or seven miles to go, perhaps on a pitch dark night, through by-ways and with roads not to be boasted of. All at once, however, up rise the men to go, for their wives, who asked and looked with imploring eyes in vain, now show themselves cloaked and bonneted, and the carriages are heard with grinding wheels at the door.'

Normally, however, the farmer had a very much harder life than today. Agricultural machinery had scarcely begun to lighten labour, and was as a rule treated as newfangled and unpractical by the average farmer. Mr. Robinson, who describes part of an ordinary day in the life of a farmer, was exceptionally up to date and celebrated as such.

'The celebrated Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, who was fond of farming, gives in a letter to a friend a most striking view of the perpetual recurrence of the little occupations which present themselves to the practical farmer, and however apparently trivial, are really important and full of pleasure to those whose hearts are in such pursuits. "Rose at three o'clock; crawled into the library, and met one who said, 'Work while ye have the light; the night cometh when no man can work: my father worketh hitherto and I work.' Rang the great bell, and roused the girls to milking, went up to the farm, roused the horse-keeper, fed the horses while he was getting up; called the boy to suckle the calves and clean out the cow-house; lighted the pipe, walked round the garden to see what was wanted there; went up to the paddock to see if the weaning calves were well; went down to the ferry to see if the boy had scooped and cleaned

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the boat; returned to the farm, examined the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff and corn of eight horses going to plough, mended the acre-staff, cut some thongs, whipcorded the ploughboys' whips, pumped the troughs full, saw the hogs fed, examined the swill-tubs, and then the cellar; ordered a quarter of malt, for the hogs want grain and the men want beer; filled the pipe again, returned to the river and bought a lighter of turf for dairy fires and another of sedge for ovens; hunted out the wheelbarrows and set them a trundling; returned to the farm, called the men to breakfast, and cut the boys' bread and cheese, and saw the wooden bottles filled; sent one plough to the three roods, another to the three half-acres, and so on; shut the gates, and the clock struck five; breakfasted; set two men to ditch the five roods, two men to drop sods and spread about the land, two more to throw up manure in the yard, and three men and six women to weed wheat; set on the carpenter to repair cow-cribs and set them up till winter; the wheeler to mend the old carts, cart-ladders, rakes, etc., preparatory to hay-time and harvest; walked to the six-acres, found hogs in the grass, went back and set a man to hedge and thorn; sold the butcher a fat calf and the suckler a lean one—the clock strikes nine—walked into the barley-field; barleys fine; picked off a few tiles and stones and cut a few thistles; the peas fine, but foul; the charlock must be topped; the tares doubtful, the fly seems to have taken them; prayed for rain, but could not see a cloud; came round to the wheat-field, wheats rather thin, but the finest colour in the world; sent four women on to the shortest wheats; ordered one man to weed along the ridge of the long wheats, and two women to keep rank and file with him in the furrows; thistles

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many, and blue-bottles no end; traversed all the wheat-field, came to the fallow field; the ditches have run crooked, set them straight; the flag-sods cut too much, the rush sods too little, strength wasted, show the men how to three-corner them; laid out more work for the ditchers, went to the ploughs, set the foot a little higher, cut a wedge, set the coulter deeper, must go and get a new mould-board against tomorrow; went to the other plough, gathered up some wood and tied over the traces, mended a horse-trace, tied a thong to the plough-hammer, went to see which lands wanted ploughing first, sat down under a bush, wondered how any man could be so silly as to call me *reverend*; read two verses in the Bible of the loving-kindness of the Lord in the midst of his temple, hummed a tune of thankfulness, rose up, whistled, the dogs wagged their tails, and away we went, dined, drunk some milk and fell asleep, woke by the carpenter for slats which the sawyer must cut. Etc., etc."

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'Such is the rustic, plodding life of many a farmer in England, and there is no part of the population for which so little has been done, and of which so little is thought, as of their farm servants. Scarcely any of these got any education before the establishment of Sunday schools—how few of them do yet, compared with the working population of towns?'

It would have been difficult to find much time for schooling, since children were employed on the land almost as soon as they could walk. This is a description from *The Boy's Country Book*:

'I have seen little boys set to drive birds from a corn-field just sown in the early spring. . . . I once saw a little fellow of this sort who stirred my sympathy exceedingly.

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It was a cold, raw, foggy day in February; the wet hung in myriads of drops on the hedges, and the dampness of the air clung about you with a dispiriting chillness. I was passing through Sherwood Forest, and across a farm brought into cultivation in the midst of its solitary waste. As I passed a tall hedge, I heard a faint, shrill cry, as of a child's voice, that, alternating with the sound of a wooden clapper, sang these words:

“*We’ve ploughed our land, we’ve sown our seed,
We’ve made all neat and gay;
So take a bit and leave a bit,
Away, birds, away!*”

‘I looked over the hedge and saw a little rustic lad, apparently about seven years old, in his blue carter-frock, with a little bag hanging by his side, and his clapper in his hand. From ridge to ridge of a heavy ploughed field, and up and down its long furrows he went, wading in the deep soil with a slow pace, singing his song with a melancholy voice, and sounding his clapper. There was something in the appearance of that little creature in that solitary place, connected with his unvaried occupation and his soft and plaintive voice, that touched powerfully my heart; and as I went on, I still heard his song, fainter and fainter, in the deep stillness. I came back in the evening, seven long hours afterwards. The twilight was closing in; yet as I rode over a slight hill, that weak, melancholy voice again reached my ear. All that weary day, that lone, weary little creature had been traversing that field, with his melancholy song and his dolorous clapper. Never did I feel a livelier pity for any living thing! At the same moment I met a little girl, and I saw by the earnest expression of her countenance that it was his

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sister. "What little bird-boy is this?" I asked. "It is my brother Johnny, sir," she replied; "it is the first day that he has ever worked; but my father said it was now time that he did something towards getting his living; and so he made him a clapper as he sat by the fire at night; and my mother made him a bag for his dinner; and he was very proud of his job, and thought he was going to be a man; but a neighbour who passed this afternoon and asked him how he liked his task, said he was crying; and that he said the silence frightened him, and he wished himself at home again, and so I am going for him; and I dare say he is tired enough."

"I have heard of boys tending cattle in the Scottish dales, where they have no hawthorn hedges as we have, because they say "they harbour birds and other vermin", but they make hedges of old women and children; that is, they set them to keep the cattle from the corn. I have seen the boys trying all schemes to while away the time; hopping, leaping, striding this way and that, cutting the turf with their knives into their names, and the names of their dogs; and twisting the shapes of their faces into other shapes; bowling stones; and singing and shouting at the top of their voices; while their clever dogs kept their eye upon the cattle, and did the actual business of the day. . . .

"There are children that are set to pick up a few pence by watching at a gate, to open it for travellers. I know a gate on a distant heath where a little girl is commonly to be found. She goes there after breakfast, takes her dinner, and stays till night. As you approach, you see her seated on a bank, or peeping from behind the gate-post; and whether you ride or walk, she opens the gate. Sometimes she prevails on two or three of her play-

fellows to go and spend a summer afternoon with her, and then it is a merry time. They contrive to find a hundred devices of pleasure on the heath. They collect flowers and plant a garden and enclose it with a circle of pebbles. They pursue the blue dragon-flies by the neighbouring clear brook, and listen to the strange cries of the snipe and wild duck, and coot and water-hen, that haunt the sedgy marsh through which it runs. But in the cold weather she is a wretched little sojourner, wrapped up in her old red cloak, and standing in the snow, rain and wind, eight or nine long hours for a few pence, perhaps for nothing—not even a civil “thank you”—from those who drive through in their glittering carriages.’

It is natural to wonder to what sort of home these children would return after their long day. Howett describes the farm labourer’s cottages:

‘When we go into the cottage of the working man, how forcibly we are struck with the difference between his mode of life and our own. There is his tenement of, at most, one or two rooms. His naked walls; bare brick, stone or mud floor, as it may be; a few wooden or rush-bottomed chairs; a deal, or old oak table; a simple fireplace, with its oven beside it, or in many parts of the kingdom, no other fireplace than the hearth; a few pots and pans—and you have his whole abode, goods and chattels. And what are these wages, out of which to maintain his family, aided by the lesser earnings of his wife by taking in washing, helping in harvest-fields, charing in more affluent people’s houses, and so on, and the earnings of the children in similar ways, or in some neighbouring factory? His own probably amount to nine, or at most, twelve shillings, and if his family be large, and there are several workers among them, the whole

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united earnings may reach twenty shillings per week; a sum which will hardly find other men wherewith to pay toll-bars, or purchase gun-powder; a sum which we throw away repeatedly on some bauble. . . . In this little hut, which we would hardly think would do for a cowshed or a hay loft, and to which the stables of many gentlemen are real palaces, is the poor man packed with all his kindred lives, interests and affections . . . and yet what fine strapping young fellows spring up in these little cabins . . . and what sweet faces and lovely forms issue thence. . . .

‘But the cottage life I have been speaking of is that of the better class of cottagers; the sober and industrious peasantry: but how far short of this condition is that of millions in this empire? To say nothing of Irish cabins, the examples of what a state of destitution, misery and squalor men may sink into; how much below this is the comfort of a Highland hut? What a contrast is there often between the cottage of an English labourer and the *steading* of a Highland farmer. There it stands, in a deep glen between high rocky mountains. His farm is a wild sheep-tract among the hills. Wheat he grows none, for it is too cold and weeping a climate. He has a little patch of oats for crowdie and oat-cake; potatoes he has, if the torrent has not risen during sudden rains, so high in the glen as to sweep his crop away . . . but the house itself—it is a little, low, long building of mud, or rough stones; the chimney composed of four short poles wrapped round with hay-bands; a flat stone laid upon it to prevent the smoke being driven down into the hut by the tempestuous winds from the hills; and another stone laid upon that, to keep it from being blown away. The roof is thatched with bracken, with the roots outer-

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most; or often the same roof is a patchwork of bracken, ling, broom and turf. A little window of perhaps one pane of thick glass or of four of oiled paper. . . . The fire of peat lies in the centre of the hut, surrounded by a few stones; wooden benches are nailed on one side against the wall, and the other is partitioned off like a large wooden cupboard, with sliding doors or curtains, for the family bed. . . . The pigs are running about the floor; hens are roosting over your head; the cows are louring in what we should call the parlour; nine or ten children, or weans . . . and a callant, or boy, who teaches the weans, and the father and mother, and very probably their father and mother, or one of them.'





VII. TRAVEL



THE RAILWAY

To the traveller of 1837 a railway trip offered at least as much excitement as an aeroplane trip does today. The death of Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade, who had stepped into the path of an engine as yet unprovided with brakes, served as a vivid reminder of the dangers attendant on this mode of travel, just as the death of the Minister for Air in the R 101 disaster emphasised those of flying, just over a century later.

The London and Greenwich line was begun in 1834, and part of it, as far as Deptford, was opened in February 1836. It was, at first, treated as a show. In his life of George Stephenson, Samuel Smiles describes how: 'The usual attractions were employed to make it a "draw"'. A band of musicians, in the garb of Beefeaters, was stationed at the London end, and another band at Deptford. For cheapness' sake the Deptford band was shortly superseded by a large barrel organ, which played

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in the passengers; but when the traffic became established the barrel-organ, as well as the Beefeater band at the London end, were both discontinued. The whole length of the line was lit up at night by a row of lamps on either side, like a street, as if to enable the locomotives or the passengers to see their way; but these lamps also were eventually discontinued as unnecessary. As a show the Greenwich Railway proved tolerably successful. During the first eleven months it carried 456,750 passengers, or an average of about 1,300 a day.'

The London and Birmingham line was begun in 1834 and opened in 1838. The London and Southampton was begun in 1835; the London and Croydon, and the Great Western from London to Bristol, in 1835; the South Eastern from London to Dover in 1836; the West London from Paddington to Kensington in 1836; the Eastern Counties from London to Colchester in 1836; the London and Blackwall in 1836; the London and Brighton in 1837.

Charles Greville's first experience of a railway trip was fortunately marred by no untoward incident. On July 18th, 1837, he writes: 'I started at 5 o'clock on Sunday evening: got to Birmingham at half-past five on Monday morning, and got upon the railroad at half past seven. Nothing could be more comfortable than the vehicle in which I was put, a sort of chariot with two places; and there is nothing disagreeable about it but the occasional whiffs of stinking air, which it is impossible to exclude altogether. The first sensation is a slight degree of nervousness, but a sense of security soon supervenes and the velocity is delightful. Town after town, one park and château after another, are left behind with the rapid variety of a moving panorama, and the continual bustle

and animation of the changes and stoppages make the journey very entertaining. The train was very long and heads were continually popping out of the several carriages, attracted by well-known voices; and then came the greetings and exclamations of surprise, the "Where are you going?" and "How on earth came you here?" It certainly renders all other travelling irksome and tedious by comparison. It was peculiarly gay at this time, because there was so much going on. There were all sorts of people going to the Liverpool races, barristers to the assizes and candidates to their several elections.'

But the early railways were sometimes rather surprising. Here is a letter written in 1837:

'I will tell you of a by-gone expedition. Thomson Junr. had Tickets to go with a number of others in the new steam carriages on the new rail road. It is only finished for 35 miles. Thomson's Father, Mother and two Sisters were dining here on Wednesday, and the Party was for Thursday the following day—Apolline could not go, but Julia, Caroline, Hankey and John, to Ellen's great annoyance, agreed to be of the party. I took them to the place of starting, which will be a fine thing when finished. It is at the back of Euston Square, and therefore fronting my dear Uncle's old house in Queen's Square, but far advanced into what were then green fields. A son of old George Barclay came out and offered me a ticket most kindly. I had another plan, and declined. I was sorry to drive off without seeing them depart, but I went Home and thence trotted off on foot to Pall Mall, saw some beautiful pictures in the British Gallery, did a little shopping, and walked home. Ellen had come to Town to go to a Ball at night. I found her ready and her carriage at the door, and eager to accompany me to see that all

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our friends were safe. The carriages were ordered at half-past four. We were admitted into the enclosure, the Police and people attending got two chairs for us, after we had been parading half an hour and no tidings of the train. There we waited an hour scarcely, in a fidget at the delay, when at last we saw them sweeping through an arch and advancing rapidly towards us. The first carriage past, the rest following, all being fastened together, when to my astonishment the first carriage, after a violent concussion which broke down the parapet wall, stood all but on one end. Every carriage of the train partook more or less of the concussion, the nearer the first the more severe—In one instant every carriage door was opened, ladies crying and jumping out, some gentlemen thrown from the top, many bleeding with broken heads and shins. Imagine poor Ellen's fright and mine—I looked in vain for any of my people; at last I seized a man's arm I have not seen for years, and asked him if he knew where Mrs. Bathurst was. He left his wife to look for her, and in one minute I saw her led by John all but fainting and just able to walk. Caroline by her side holding her nose, and John looking very white. Finding that no great damage was done, and that a violent blow on the calf of the legs was the worst, I turned round to lead them to the carriage, and saw Col. Moore looking very sick and supported by one of the Warres. He had his shin cut and with difficulty he got into a cab, bleeding not a little. Most of those in the first train were more or less hurt, but none dangerously. . . . It appears that the accident was caused by the engineer not having calculated the additional impetus given by the weight of so many people. The steam had been taken off, and the train was moving on an inclined plane scarcely perceptible

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to the eye. A second train which followed the one my friends were in was better managed, and was perfectly successful. Julia says the feeling of the rapid motion was delightful, the disagreeable part was passing a tunnel, being five minutes in utter darkness, and the smell of oil, which annoyed her all through. When this railroad is complete, people may reach Liverpool in about 8 hrs.!

Apart from the inconveniences attendant on stopping too sharply, the early trains were not always punctual, and there was much grumbling in letters to *The Times* and other papers. Here is a complaint in *The Times* of 1837:

‘I was a passenger by the two o’clock train to Box Moor yesterday and was informed at the London station that little more than one hour would be occupied in the passage. The fact proved very different, as we did not reach Box Moor until the expiration of two hours and a quarter from the time of starting from Euston Square. The train scarcely went a snail’s pace through the Primrose Hill tunnel, so were we told the engine was not right (it was engine No. 2 I believe) and we did not reach Harrow under one hour and eleven minutes—eleven miles. We loitered about thirteen minutes at Harrow, some time at Watford, and met with a most confused and uncomfortable reception at Box Moor; when on our return we were all huddled together for a quarter of an hour in a small yard, exposed to a burning sun, until the bell rang for starting, and then crushed through a small gate at the risk of our limbs, instead of being allowed quietly to take our seats in the carriages as we arrived, notwithstanding we had paid our money and were in the possession of our tickets. The collection

of these tickets, which took place on our approach to the extremity of Regent's Park, for which purpose the train was stopped, occupied about half an hour. The tunnels are all most uncomfortably dark. . . . It is rather too bad of the directors to be thus making their experimental journeys at the expense of the public.'

We must assume that this gentleman had not possessed himself of a copy of *Railroadiana*, the first railway guide (according to its own announcement), which gives a description of the beauties and places of historic interest on this Harrow-Watford trip, to while away the journey.

In the following year a writer to *The Times* is so indignant at missing his connection that he takes up his pen in protest before he has reached his destination:

'Allured by the advertisements of the Birmingham and London Railroad Company, I presented myself at the Euston Square station at eight o'clock last night, with a view to going through to the Crewe Station, on the Grand Junction. After some vexatious requisites, the train started at half-past eight. It had not proceeded above two hundred yards before we were brought to a standstill, and it was a quarter past nine before we finally left. We arrived at Denbigh Hall at twenty minutes past eleven; here we found no carriages ready and had to wait till a quarter past twelve before any made their appearance, in a sort of tent or shed, without lights and only the embers of a dying fire. At that time some carriages were brought out and I wedged myself into one, with great difficulty, accompanied by three other passengers, three well stuffed carpet bags and a hat box. . . . We arrived at a quarter-past seven a.m. half an hour too late for the train; instead of reaching my own house

at half past twelve I shall not do so till half past eight this evening. . . . The mails travelling in the ordinary way passed us on the road and arrived in time for the seven o'clock train.

'I had forgotten to say that, although the company make a great fuss about having no coachmen or guards to pay, the guard applied to me on our arrival here for a gratuity. . . .'

When the mails were first sent by rail (on the London and Birmingham railway) the mailcoaches were driven to Euston, put on trucks complete with coachman, guard, passengers and luggage, and, on arrival, reharnessed to horses. On payment of first class fares, private coaches with their occupants were put on trucks. On the Birmingham—Manchester line the first class carriages were made like mailcoaches, with seats for four passengers in each compartment.

But the most luxurious was the Great Western. Built by Brunel with a special broad gauge, so that it ran much more smoothly than the others, it was supplied with four kinds of carriages. The royal or posting carriages were fitted with tables and sofas; then came the first and second classes, whilst the third, as on all the lines, was rather worse than a present-day cattle-truck. It was open and the sides were so low that passengers were in constant danger of falling out.

One inventor was so impressed by the possibilities of railways that he produced a miniature one for taking an invalid up to bed; a portable rail was laid up the staircase, with a curve at the top, whilst a carriage was drawn up by pulleys.

Inevitably the spread of railways aroused a good deal of opposition, both from landowners who feared their

property would be ruined, and also from those who believed that moral detriment must result from moving people to and fro in masses. The vigour with which the Eton authorities tried to prevent the railway from being built, lest it distract the boys, is well known. So too is the attitude of the University of Cambridge at a somewhat later date, when the Vice-Chancellor felt that it must be as displeasing to Almighty God as it was to himself that the railway should come to Cambridge. But the railways were equally vigorously defended, and some of the advantages expected to accrue from them, such as that England would be able to dispense with a large standing army, make curious reading today. Still, in view of the vast claims often made for 'Science' nowadays, it is hardly surprising that people who felt themselves on the eve of a steam-age should have hoped that the new railways would solve all difficulties, economic, political and moral.

Cuthbert W. Johnson's arguments in favour of railways are as all-embracing as they are fervent, the diffusion of manure and knowledge going hand in hand:

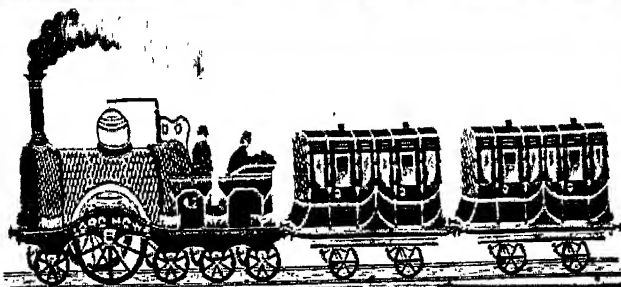
'The Advantages of Railways to Agriculture. By Cuthbert W. Johnson, Barrister-at-law.'

'For the disposal of a Farmer's produce, the quickness and regularity of a Railway, in all states of the weather, renders it incomparably superior to a Water Carriage—unlike a Canal, a Railway is never rendered impassable by Ice, an interruption which occurs in weather above all others most favourable for getting manures upon his land.

'The importance of effecting an intensive and general interchange of soils, for the purpose of rendering them



The Good Old Days.



The Present Time.

18. Coventry Ribbon machine-woven by Messrs. Stevens

‘During the agricultural riots of 1830-31, a telegraphic dispatch reached Portsmouth ordering troops from its garrison to be immediately forwarded to Winchester, upon which city a serious attack was threatened.

‘The soldiers were forthwith placed on board a steamer which conveyed them to Southampton, from whence they were forwarded in carriages to Winchester. From the time of issuing orders in London until the military arrived at their destination, only six hours elapsed, though not less than 100 miles intervened. This was thought very expeditious, and even here, if it had not been for a Steam Engine, it could not have been effected. But if the Southampton Railway had been completed, the same Steam Engine could have conveyed the troops from London to Winchester in two hours, or only one third of the time.

‘. . . Sheridan once said, “Give me a free press, and I will not care if the Government of this country is corrupt.” If he had lived in the age of improved conveyance he might as tersely have added, “Give me Railways throughout England, and with a handful of soldiers I will subdue all its local disturbers, whether rebels or invaders.” Such a facility of intercourse will supersede the necessity for a large standing army in England.

‘Railways necessarily increase the sources of our enjoyment. Those whose occupations prevent at present their affording the time requisite to visit the most beautiful districts of England will be enabled to reach them with as little expenditure of time as is now required by a London inhabitant of Gravesend, or other neighbouring place of resort.

‘The humane should encourage the establishment of railways; for no improvement of modern days will tend

so much to reduce animal suffering. Let anyone notice the oxen and sheep, urged on by the goads of their drivers to the London market, and mark their panting sides, dulled eyes and limping gait—let him mark the coach and post horses fresh taken from the vehicles they have been compelled to urge on at a speed beyond their strength—let him observe their galled sides, distended nostrils and quivering limbs—and then reflect that when railroads are established, all this suffering will cease, in spite of any opposition from bigotry or attachment to old habits. . . .

‘To repeat the eloquent observation of Sir Robert Peel:

“‘The Steam Engine and Rail Road are not merely facilitating the transport of merchandise; they are not merely shortening the duration of journeys or administering to the supply of physical wants; they are spreading the intercourse between mind and mind; they are creating new demands for knowledge; they are fertilising the intellectual as well as the material waste; they are removing the impediments which obscurity or remoteness or poverty may hitherto have opposed to the emergence of real merit.

“‘Railroads are indeed introducing a new era into civilised Europe, of which it is impossible to foresee the results or anticipate the advantages. Our very language begins already to be affected. Men talk of ‘getting up their steam’ whenever they want to make some great effort or exertion; and when their tongues outstrip truth, they are said to be ‘going it at a Railway speed’. The ‘Lion of the Day’ will, ere long, give place to the ‘Locomotive of the Day’. Distances which used to be measured in miles are now likely to be computed in hours and minutes; and a merchant, who lives some

thirty miles out of London, will tell you he lives an hour from the Exchange. Our twopenny post, as we call it, may be expected to reach every corner of the kingdom; and in a few years, the first, second and other deliveries of London letters will be as punctual at Liverpool as they are at Brentford."

"Thus", says another intelligent authority, "this country has gained (and will maintain) the start of all others by this new mode of internal conveyance by the assistance of the gigantic power of steam—whether we look to Commerce—to Agriculture—or to the Manufactures; and this at a time when the national energy has so much need of a stimulus, owing to the depressed state of the industrious classes. But we must look with a perspective glance, and become prophetic in the case of this splendid invention, and consider it far above all price—it will become a check to the growth of cities and towns, especially in this modern Babylon, in which I write; and will, there is no possible doubt, above all spread knowledge and diffuse intelligence over towns and cities, and finally tend to universal good." ' . . . *etc.*, *etc.*

Enthusiastic as Mr. Johnson waxed, all this rushing about was not considered beneficial by all. Indeed, in the most aristocratic circles, if we may believe Mr. Disraeli, it was expected to produce a levelling effect. Here is his account from *Sybil* of a very blue-blooded dinner party, and the conversation at it:

"The dinner was stately, as becomes the high nobility. There were many guests, yet the table seemed only a gorgeous spot in the capacious chamber. The side tables were laden with silver vases and golden shields arranged on shelves of crimson velvet. The walls were covered

with Fitz-Warennnes, De Mowbrays and De Veres. The attendants glided about without noise and with the precision of military discipline. They watched your wants, they anticipated your wishes, and they supplied all you desired with a lofty air of pompous devotion.

“You came by the railroad?” enquired Lord de Mowbray mournfully of Lady Marney.

“From Marham, about ten miles from us,” replied her ladyship.

“A great revolution!”

“Isn’t it?”

“I fear it has a very dangerous tendency to equality,” said his lordship, shaking his head; “I suppose Lord Marney gives them all the opposition in his power.”

“There is nobody so violent against the railroads as George,” said Lady Marney; “I cannot tell you what he does not do! He organised the whole of our division against the Marham line!”

“I rather counted on him”, said Lord de Mowbray, “to assist me in resisting this joint branch here; but I was surprised to learn he had consented.”

“Not until the compensation was settled,” innocently remarked Lady Marney; “George never opposes them after that. He gave up all opposition to the Marham line when they agreed to his terms.”

“And yet”, said Lord de Mowbray, “I think if Lord Marney would take a different view of the case and look to the moral consequences he would hesitate. Equality, Lady Marney, equality is not our *métier*. If we nobles do not make a stand against the levelling spirit of the age, I am at a loss to know who will fight the battle. You may depend upon it that these railroads are very dangerous things.”

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“I have no doubt of it. I suppose you have heard of Lady Vanilla’s trip from Birmingham? Have you not, indeed? She came up with Lady Laura, and two of the most gentlemanlike men sitting opposite her; “Never met”, she says, “two more intelligent men.” She begged one of them at Wolverhampton to change seats with her, and he was most politely willing to comply with her wishes, only it was necessary that his companion should move at the same time, for they were chained together! Two gentlemen, sent to town for picking a pocket at Shrewsbury races.”

“A countess and a felon! So much for public conveyances,” said Lord Mowbray. “But Lady Vanilla is one of those who will talk with everybody.”

“She is very amusing, though,” said Lady Marney.

“I dare say she is,” said Lord de Mowbray; “but believe me, my dear Lady Marney, in these times especially, a countess has something else to do than be amusing.”

“You think, as property has its duties as well as its rights, rank has its bores as well as its pleasures?”

‘Lord Mowbray mused.’

COACHING

The establishment of railways not unnaturally stimulated coach proprietors to try to hold their own. Mr. Sherman, of the ‘Bull in Mouth’, London, announced that: ‘In defiance of the extraordinary power with which coach proprietors have to contend, and notwithstanding the boasted speed of the Liverpool and Birmingham

Railway, "The Telegraph" Manchester day coach continues to perform the journey to Manchester throughout, without changing coaches, within an hour of the time in which the journey is accomplished by the combined agency of the coaches and the railway.'

Unlike the early railways, the coaches—especially the mail coaches—had a great reputation for punctuality; indeed, they are said to have set the time for the countryside. Here is an enthusiastic description of those days:

'Why, how does old roadside Jim know the time to ease his linen bag of its parsimonious contents of bread and bacon? By the mail. In the west of England particularly, the mail acts as a regulator, just as the sun on the hills acts as a thermometer. Ask a young coachman how he got his nerve and quickness, and in nine cases out of ten his reply is, "I scraped it together when I was at night work on the mail!" There is something, in short, irresistible in the word "mail", and is it perfectly astonishing how she keeps her time, worked as she generally is through long foggy nights, with blind, bolting, thick-winded devils that will go nowhere else; still, notwithstanding the danger of the fast night-travelling, nothing seems to stop the pace, and all impediments yield to the mail. During the late snowstorm at Christmas, nothing was talked of at breakfast time in the country but "where is the mail?" In London everybody was anxiously expecting the arrival of the mail; and in country towns waiters, chambermaids, ostlers and post-boys assembled in groups to enquire about the non-arrival of the mail; leaders out at every place to forward the mail; in fact, throughout the whole country she seems omnipotent with coach-masters, and waits for

nothing or nobody. Turnpike gates fly open the moment she crowns the overhanging hill, as if by magic, and turnpike men are dumb at her approach; at lodge gates, servants are sent out to wait for the mail; horse-keepers dream of the mail long before they hear the guard's well-known twang; and the horses themselves seem to understand, as if by instinct, that their best pace is required for the mail.'

One finds this same absorption in coaching on all sides. One of the sights of London was the mails 'quickly on the move up Constitution Hill *en masse*, like a fleet in full sail. Now the Devonport *Quicksilver* leads, Ward pulling at his good little chestnut thoroughbred leaders to keep them from springing as they hear the *Bristol* bars rattling alongside. Now the *Bristol* gets upon terms with her beyond the "Packhorse" at Turnham Green, each struggling for the change at Hounslow; *longo inter-alto* roll steadily along the old *Exeter*, *Gloucester*, *Poole* and *Bath*, *Portsmouth* and *Stroud* bringing up the rear. And now come and take your stand at the door of the "Peacock" at Islington, and see the North country mails arrange themselves, giving the passengers just time enough for the night's campaign. Up comes the little thick-set porter of the inn, shouting, "Now Holyhead, Leeds and Glasgow, Woburn, Dunstable or St. Albans," and off go the coaches.'

But the grandest day of all was the Sovereign's birthday, when there was a procession of mail coaches from the City to the West-end and through Hyde Park, usually passing the Postmaster General's house on the way. Herr von Raumer, a German visitor to England, was much impressed. He writes:

'Such a splendid display of carriages-and-four as

these mail coaches afford would not be found or got together in all Berlin. It was a real pleasure to see them in all the pride and strength which an hour later was to send them in every direction with incredible rapidity to every corner of England.'

From the 'Belle Sauvage Inn' at Ludgate Hill numbers of coaches poured out daily: the *Portsmouth Rocket*, the *Southampton Times*, the *Cheltenham Berkeley Hunt* and the *Oxford Defiance*. And from the 'Bolt-in-Tun' in Fleet Street, the *Hastings Regulator*, the *Tunbridge Wells Star* and the *Southampton Rover* set out. The number of mail coaches leaving the General Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, every night, was twenty-seven, and they covered some 5,500 miles of road.

Now the stage coach offered its patrons yet other delights; for it afforded its coachmen opportunities for virtuoso driving in a way that the railway does not. So that to the young sporting bucks the stage coachman was something of a hero, and the names and exploits of the most brilliant of them constantly reappear in the sporting literature of the day. There was John Willan of the *Brighton Times*, 'a man of nerve'; Holmes, of the *Oxford Blenheim*, 'an artist'; Tom Mountain, of the *Birmingham Tantivy*, could 'hit his inner leader with absolute precision'; whilst the gallant Captain Warbuck's 'attention to ladies and families travelling with him' was 'quite exemplary'. Greatest of all seems to have been Tom Cracknell of the *Bristol Tantivy*, who was a 'flyer' indeed.

The deeds of these worthies are celebrated in a song heartily commended by Nimrod. (The 'Lancashire lord' is Lord Sefton's heir, a great coaching enthusiast. 'Three feet of tin' is the guard's horn.)

* TRAVEL *

AIR: 'Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen.'

*Here's to the old ones of four-in-hand fame,
Harrison, Peyton and Ward, sir;
Here's to the fast ones that after them came,
Ford and the Lancashire lord, sir.*

CHORUS

*Let the steam-pot
Hiss till it's hot,
Give me the speed of the 'Tantivy' trot!*

*Here's to the team all harnessed to start,
Brilliant in brass and in leather;
Here's to the waggoners skilled in the art,
Coupling the cattle together.*

Let the steam-pot, etc.

*Here's to the dear little damsels within,
Here's to the swells on the top, sir;
Here's to the music in three feet of tin,
And here's to the tapering crop, sir.*

Let the steam-pot, etc.

*Here's to the shape that is shown the near side,
Here's to the blood on the off, sir;
Limbs with no check to their freedom of stride,
Wind without whistle or cough, sir.*

Let the steam-pot, etc.

*Here's to the arm that can hold 'em when gone,
Still to a gallop inclined, sir:*

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*Heads, in the front, with no bearing-reins on,
Tails, with no cruppers behind, sir.*

Let the steam-pot, etc.

*Here's to the dragsmen I've dragged into song,
Salisbury, Mountain and Co., sir;
Here's to the Cracknell who cracks 'em along—
They are men who can ne'er be called slow, sir.*

Let the steam-pot, etc.

*Here's to Macadam, the Mac of All-Macs;
Here's to the road we ne'er tire on;
Let me but roll on the granite he cracks,
Ride he who likes it on iron.*

*Let the steam-pot
Hiss till it's hot,
Give me the speed of the 'Tantivy' trot!*

Not content with admiring these heroes, many young bloods aspired to emulate them, and to 'handle the ribbons' themselves. Driving horses was, of course, a normal part of a sportsman's education, but amateur coaching did not become really popular till after Macadam had smoothed the road surfaces, and the coachman's box had become part of the body of the vehicle with consequent benefit of springs. Till 1815, although coaches were sprung, the box was not; indeed it was considered quite a dangerous innovation to put the coachman on springs lest his more comfortable seat should cause him to go to sleep while driving. With sprung seats and even roads, four-in-hand clubs could flourish.

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Many young gentlemen were so enthralled with coaching that they tried to imitate the professionals, not only in driving, but in dress, speech, manners and habits. This is how Gronow remembered them:

'In the days of which I speak there were amateur coachmen, who drove with unflinching regularity and in all weathers, the public stage-coaches, and delighted in the opportunity of assimilating themselves with professional Jehus. Some young men, heirs of large landed proprietors, mounted the box, handled the ribbons and bowled along the high road; they touched their hats to their passengers, and did not disdain even the tip of a shilling or half-a-crown with which it was the custom to remunerate the coachman. Many persons liked travelling to Brighton in *The Age*, which was tooled along by Sir Vincent Cotton, whilst others preferred Charley Tyrwhitt. On the Holyhead, Oxford and the Bath and Bristol roads, Lord Harborough, Lord Clonmel, Sir Thomas Mostyn . . . and other members of the Four-in-Hand Club, were seen, either driving the coach or sitting cheek-by-jowl with the coachman, talking about horses and matters relating to "life upon the road". One of the members of the Four-in-Hand Club, Mr. Akers, was so determined to be looked upon as a regular coachman, that he had his front teeth so filed that a division between them might enable him to expel his spittle in the true fashion of some of the most knowing stage-coach drivers.'

The first famous Four-in-Hand Club had a flourishing existence for some twenty years, and then broke up owing to the death of so many of its founders. It was soon revived, however, the leading spirit being Lord Chesterfield. On June 2nd, 1838, the rules for the new

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club were drawn up. Leading members, besides the Earl of Chesterfield, were the Marquis of Waterford (called 'the Mad Marquis'), Count Bathyani, Lord Alfred Paget, and Mr. George Payne. The coaches went in procession through Hyde Park to Topham's Hotel, Richmond, where the members had an excellent dinner. They are said to have celebrated the occasion in the following ditty:

THE MEETING OF THE COACHES

AIR: 'Meeting of the Waters'

*There is not in wide London a courtyard so neat,
As that in whose precincts the R.D.C.¹ meet.
How great is the throng when the coaches depart!
Whilst Macdonald is leading so good at a start.*

*Yet it was not that Chesterfield gave to our view
His fastest of steppers and deepest of blue²,
Not the workmanlike turn-out of Alford so pat,
The leaders of Suffield! The wheelers of Bat!³*

*'Twas that cattle such goers as Peyton ne'er held,
Were driven by whips scarce by Beaufort excelled;
Frank Copeland is springing his four on the road,
And Payne's hospitality's told by his load!*

*In this famed driving club, it were endless to trace
All the notable coachmen, the ribbons who grace,
Since Waterford, Paget and Pitt swell the stream
And the eye dwells delighted on every team.*

¹ Richmond Driving Club.

² Chesterfield colours.

³ Bathyani.

* TRAVEL *

*In Richmond's sweet hamlet how choice the whitebait!
Though Topham's champagne sometimes makes our
fours eight:
Now let each thirsty soul as the goblet he drains,
Drink the President's health, may he long hold the reins!*

Not content with their clubs and driving their own coaches, enterprising young bloods would sit next the stage coachman and be allowed, in return for a tip, to take the reins. This contingency must surely have added to the risks of travel!

Lord William Pitt Lennox writes: 'Many of the rising generation will scarcely believe in the delight of a journey . . . in a stage coach, and will probably denounce the affair as dead slow. But there was life and pleasure in it. What could be more exhilarating upon a fine spring morning, when a passing shower had well laid the dust, to find yourself on the box-seat of a well-horsed vehicle—to be welcomed by an intelligent, civil and obliging dragsman, who enquired if you had your driving gloves on, and whether you liked to take the ribands for the next twenty miles? . . . It was early on a May morning that I found myself at the 'White Horse Cellar' just as the York coach was starting for Bath. I had previously secured the box, and, encased in a double-breasted drab coat, watched the arrival of one of the inside passengers.

'“Nice morning, sir,” said my companion as we passed through the turnpike that then existed opposite the entrance to the Park near Apsley House; “the flowers are all a-growing and a-blowing”; this time he sang. . . . He was a well-dressed, natty-looking fellow, decked out in a neat dark brown coat, white hat, corduroy breeches, well-polished boots, cloth leggings, and a splendid pair of

double sewn buckskin gloves. Huge dark whiskers fringed the borders of each cheek, shaped like a mutton-chop, and (as a butcher's boy in Knightsbridge irreverently remarked) were large enough to pad a cart saddle.

'I soon discovered from his manners and remarks, that my new coaching ally, Mr. Pearce, was a prodigious favourite with the fair sex . . . as I had won the good graces of this driving Giovanni, he offered me the reins just as we passed the "Sun Inn" at Maidenhead.

' "Take 'em gently up-hill", said he, "and then you can have a spurt over the thicket."

' "Do we pull up at the 'Coach and Horses'?" I enquired, in so nervous a manner that Sam Pearce, who was what is termed "wide awake" upon all affairs of the heart, immediately guessed my motive.

' "We can, sir," he responded, "if you like, perhaps Dick has a parcel for Squire Lee. . . ."

'As we reached the well-known spot . . . my heart began to palpitate, my hands to tremble, and I should have gone past the house had not my box-companion caught hold of the reins with a firm grasp and pulled up the horses in front of the "Coach and Horses"'.
'

'Fortunately for me, my Dulcinea had not noticed the hand that assisted me, and seeing the coach stop, rushed to the door exclaiming:

' "Oh, my lord!—who would have thought it! How you have improved in driving! Do you recollect when you upset the dog-cart close to the pond?" '

The easy-going coachman received a 'gold seven-shilling piece' for thus humouring his passenger. The prospect of a substantial tip must have been a frequent inducement to coachmen to allow enthusiastic amateurs

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to drive. Nor was this their sole weakness, according to Nimrod, who describes a common trick of 'swallowing a passenger' by persuading him to walk a little way from the starting point, and then surreptitiously picking him up, so that his fare could be pocketed.

Travelling by coach was not always so agreeable. Here is a scene from the popular farce *A Flight to America*, or *Ten Hours in New York*, by Leman Rede:

(The story is that of runaway intrigues—a girl, dressed as a boy, running away from a distasteful marriage, etc.)

'[Mr. Blenkinsop, with a travelling cap on a Welsh wig, and wrapped in a number of shawls, etc.: he disburdens himself of them during scene.]

'Blenkinsop: Folks talk and talk about wonderful improvements in travelling—it's all humbug, sir—regular humbug of the first water—unadulterated humbug. How dare they pop a man five feet eleven into a vehicle six foot by three.

'Pirouette (French dancing master): I hope you are pretty well, I thank you, after your travel.

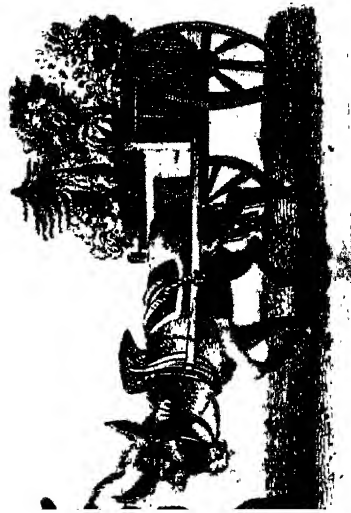
'Blenkinsop: No, sir, I am not pretty well, I thank *you*. I am cursed uncomfortable; but I say, my outsider—you was an outsider, wasn't you?

'Pirouette: Oh!—oui!—on de top of de outside.

'Blenkinsop: Yes, and I was in the middle of the inside, chewing my own knees, and trying to digest the leggings of my indescribables.

'Pirouette: You have sleep, I see, by your nightcaps.

'Blenkinsop: Then you see more than I know. Sleep! I've heard of men sleeping in a sentry-box, up in a tree, or down in a dry well; but sleep inside a coach I defy you. A fat fellow was opposite, though, snoring like a rhino-



20. London Scenes from a Children's Book



21. Gambling. From a contemporary Novel

* TRAVEL *

ceros, and stretching out his unwieldy legs every moment, kicking the bark off mine, and just as I was about getting the give of forty winks, roo-too-too-too, the Guard's horn goes, and all one's work to do over again. The inside of a coach! it's the Black Hole of Calcutta, made easy to the meanest capacity.

'*Pirouette*: Ah, ma foi, de inside is nosing to de out.

'*Blenkinsop*: De out—why, there you can breathe.

'*Pirouette*: Certainement, and den you can freeze. I vas cold as vat you call—ice.

'*Blenkinsop*: That's better than being boiled—I weighed sixteen stone when I set out—I'm slim and genteel now (*Looking at board*) Reduced fares, indeed—it's reduced passengers they ought to talk about.'

Such were the exigencies of travel that William Kitchiner, M.D., issued a fat volume called *The Traveller's Oracle or Maxims for Locomotion*, full of advice to those rash enough to leave their homes. It provided for every emergency, from hymns (words and music) that could safely be sung by all denominations, to the name and address of a shop that sold leather sheets as a precaution against damp beds. Here is some of his advice:

'THE TRAVELLER'S ORACLE

or

Maxims for Locomotion

by

William Kitchiner, M.D.

'Innkeepers generally ask their guests "what they would please to have for Dinner?" The best Answer you can make to this is the Question: "What have you got in your Larder?" to which beg leave to pay a visit. . . .

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'The *Safest Foods* are Eggs, plain boiled, or roasted meat, and fruit—touch not any of those Queer Compounds commonly yclept *Ragouts, Made Dishes, Puddings, Pies*, etc. Above all, be on your guard against *Soup* and *Wine*. . . . if a Man is not a very fastidious Epicure, he need never fear Hunger or Langour when he can get good Bread and Water—*i.e.*, provided he carry with him a Brunswick Sausage and a bottle of Brandy. *Brandy* for this purpose should be of the full Proof Strength . . . the strongest Brandy usually sold is what is termed 10% below Proof.

'It would be a ridiculous vanity for a traveller to carry costly Rings, Watches, Snuff-boxes, etc.; they are direct invitations to Robbers and irresistible encitements to Inn-keepers to raise their charges.

'Well might St. Paul tell us to

"Beware of Dogs".

First Epistle to Philippians, Chap. III, v. 2. Therefore never travel without a good tough Black Thorn in your Fist. . . .'

[These are some of the articles Kitchiner also advises to be taken:] 'an Iron Stick with a Hook next the Hand, Umbrella, Sketch and a Note Book, Paper, Ink, Pins, Needles, Thread, Foot Rule, a Warning Watch (*i.e.* alarm-clock), Mariner's Compass, Thermometer, Barometer, One Foot Achromatic Telescope, Opera Glass, Night Lamp, Tinder Box, Knife & Fork, etc. Goloshes or Paraboues are useful as guards against Cold and Damp. These are sold in Regent Street . . . etc., etc.

'If circumstances compel you to ride on the outside of a Coach, put on two shirts and two pairs of stockings, turn up the collar of your Great Coat, and tie a handkerchief

round it, and have plenty of dry Straw to set your Feet on.

'Travelling Medicine Chests should contain: Salts, Rhubarb, Sal Volatile and Sticking Plaster, a Lancet, Carbonate of Soda, strong Peppermint Lozenges, a pocket Bottle, some Biscuits, for the Languor felt when the Stomach is empty may often be removed by eating a Biscuit; and when it can be so appeased, it is a more innocent way of amusing it than by winding it up with Wine. . . .

'In Lonesome places, where an accident may oblige you to rest, if you carry Fire Arms, it may be well to let the Landlord see (as it were accidentally) that you are well armed.

'A Pair of Pistol Holsters, covered with black fur and attached to the coachbox, are very good defensive furniture. . . .

'J. Harriott, Esq. . . . states that in travelling to America with a great number of Persons in the same conveyance, and learning from their conversation that the Sleeping-house had but few Beds, which would render it necessary that several should sleep in a Bed; to which Mr. Harriott felt great aversion, but said nothing. Finding at the Sleeping-House that their apprehensions were realised, he opened his baggage and took his Horse Pistols and loaded them in the presence of the Passengers, and then placed one of them on each of the Pillows: when the Passengers asked eagerly what he meant by that, he told them that he had travelled a great deal in many Countries, and had got so much into the habit of it that he could not sleep if he did not place a loaded Pistol on each side of his head. The consequence was, he had all the Bed to himself, as none of them offered to look near it.

‘Travellers who can take their time should ride but a short stage the first and second day, say not exceeding twenty Miles; on the third, a good Horse will carry you from thirty to forty.

‘Should a person in travelling for any considerable distance, and sitting backwards, meet with Companions who close the Windows and pertinaciously persist in prohibiting any importation of *Oxygen*—if all arguments are unavailing—you may let your Stick or your Umbrella fall (accidentally) against one of the Windows.

‘To preserve the Feet of Invalids and Elderly people warm requires the application of a *Califacient*: these are made of Pewter, are very Portable, and hot water for filling them is easily procurable at all the Stages.

‘We would caution persons going over to the Continent against *carrying Letters*, as a very heavy fine attaches itself to persons having Letters found in their possession.

Those who not only ventured across the Channel but braved the Atlantic as well had to put up with severe hardship. The Atlantic was actually crossed by steam in 1837 by the *Sirius* and the *Great Western*.

Bell’s *Life in London & Sporting Chronicle* May 27th, 1838, reports the *Sirius*’s second crossing. . . . ‘The *Sirius* made the passage from Cork (to New York) in 18 days, and the *Great Western* from Bristol in 15. . . .

‘The American papers, although not behind in paying a tribute to British skill and enterprise in thus extending steam navigation, are careful to note that they were the first to show the way, some years since, by the steam ship *Savannah*, which went twice to Europe and made “a vast circuit of navigation”.’

* TRAVEL *

Most people voyaged under sail, however. Here is an extract from a private letter, describing an Atlantic crossing:

'We sailed from Leith Roads on Sunday morning about 9 o'clock (the 6th of April) and was clear of the Firth of Forth and Fife and all the lands about before dusk that eveng. and made a fine run up to the Pentland Firth by Tuesday evg. and as the wind was good and favourable Capt. Young thought it best to run right through without going into the Orkneys, so we passed the far-famed Johnny Groat's House. . . . Off the last point of land we see on leaving Scotland, W. Harrower and about half a Dozen more of us took a bottle or two as a kind of farewell to Old Scotland and our kind friends in it and you may rely my dear David you were not forgot.

'A few days after in a heavy gale and Mountainous Sea I had the misfortune to fall upon a water bucket on Deck and either broke two or three of my ribs or severely shattered them, which confined me much to my cabin for about a fortnight, indeed had I not been copiously bled and blistered the second day after, it would very soon been over with me, but I have great reason to be thankful to the Almighty Disposer of all human events that I now feel very little effect from it.

'Perhaps I may just as well say here by way of cutting short that we had as good passage as we could wish for until we came in sight of Land, which was precisely that day 3 weeks after we lost sight of the island of Lewis in the West of Scotland, in the course of that time we passed some very large Ice bergs we happened to pass one at no great distance and at that time there was another vessel . . . was obliged to go to leeward of it and for a few minutes her Hull and Masts was completely out of

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our sight . . . you can have no conception of the severe cold that is experienced within miles of them, an old sailor can tell you fine when you are approaching to their neighbourhood by the clear icy appearance of the atmosphere in the direction where they are and the intense cold that is felt for Miles off. They are of all sizes and all manner of shapes, some we passed were larger than Inchkeith. . . .

‘I think it was after we passed the Ice bergs that we got into a shoal of beautiful large Whales and the day being fine and serene clear sky we were much amused by the tumbling and spouting of these huge Monsters of the deep, some of them were within 20 or 30 yards of us and will you believe it that one of the passengers fired at *and missed a Whale* not above that distance from the ship, however the Man was a good shot for a week or two after that when we were fast among the Ice he shot two Seals and I ought to tell you that it was with your gun, but this was all children’s play. . . .

‘I think I mentioned before that we had a most excellent passage till we came within sight of Land . . . at all events we had it so settled that we would be in Quebec in about 8 or 10 days—the Sea is the place my Dear David to show the short sighted calculations of us poor vain ignorant arrogant yea less than earth-worms, oh! the vanity of Man to attempt to scan the works and ways of the Almighty. Send all Atheists 12 or 14 days among the Ice it will cool them if it should not convert them, off Cape Britain and I suppose about 11 or 12 o’clock at night W. Whites (Glasgo’ Bank) brother was at the helm but no blame is attached to him for he kept telling the officer in watch that there was Ice a head, however I suppose the Man did not believe him . . . but in the course of a few

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minutes we came in contact with a large shoal of Drift Ice and stove in one of the loading Ports, through which the water rushed in a fearful and alarming manner and had it not been for the presence of mind of a young man belonging to Kinghorn, by name John Ramsay who fortunately slept in that Birth, I say fortunately . . . for all in the dark poor Jock jumped out of his hammock and took the first bed and bedding he could lay his hands on (which Happened to be Michael White's) and stuffed them into the Port Hole and secured them as best he could before a single soul on board even the Captain knew that she was stove. . . . He with great coolness and deliberation afterwards came aft and told the Captain who by this time was on deck and here I must give the Captain every credit. . . .

'The port was patched up . . . but still she was making a great deal of water and the passengers volunteered to stand by the pumps and allow the men to work the ship. . . . I think we got clear of that drift of Ice that day and stood away for new Newfoundland . . . but at midnight we again had the misfortune to fall in amongst the Ice a second time and there we were doomed to remain 10 or 11 days, for the greater part of which time I do not know how our frail bark escaped the tremendous battering of the Ice you may imagine the incessant roar of Thunder or the continual battering of Cannon in battle . . . for it was crash after crash which to all human appearance we could not withstand. . . .'

From a private letter.



VIII. MEN



Masculine society of the time was still dominated by the twin figures of the Wit and the Dandy, but the reigning Dandy of the moment, Count d'Orsay, was a vast improvement on his Regency predecessor, George Brummell. The latter was distinguished merely for clothes and impudence. Count d'Orsay on the other hand possessed a splendid physical presence, was a superb horseman and a great patron of sport; whilst his tact and social charm were immense assets when jointly with Lady Blessington he entertained the most intellectual society in London. Here is how two of his intimates remembered him.

Lord Lamington writes:

'Count d'Orsay was a brilliant leader of the dandy class—strikingly handsome, of a splendid physique, a commanding appearance, an admirable horseman of the *Haute École* school. When he appeared in the perfection of dress (for the tailor's art had not died out with

George IV) with that expression of self-confidence and self-complacency which the sense of superiority gives, he was the observed of all. Add to this his real accomplishments—a sculptor, an excellent artist, and the possessor of a happy faculty of seizing the expression and drawing an admirable likeness in a remarkably short time.

‘Men took great pains with themselves (in those days)—they did not slouch and moon through life; and it was remarkable how highly they were appreciated by the crowd, not only of the upper, but the lower classes. I have frequently ridden down to Richmond with Count d’Orsay. A striking figure he was in his blue coat with gilt buttons thrown well back to show the wide expanse of snowy shirt-front and buff waistcoat: his tight leathers and polished boots; his well-curled whiskers and handsome countenance; a wide-brimmed glossy hat, spotless white gloves. He was the very *beau idéal* of a leader of fashion. As he rode through Kensington and Brompton he excited general attention—they stared at him as at a superior being.

‘He possessed that great quality, self-command; this enabled him to bear his own burden in life without inflicting the history of his sorrows on others. During the latter years of his residence at Gore House, he could only leave it from midnight on Saturday until the same hour on Sunday; at all other times his creditors were on the watch to seize him. On Saturday after twelve he was to be seen at Crockford’s, always gay and smiling, as if he had no anxieties or fears. . . .’

Captain Gronow seems to have been sincerely fond of him:

‘I believe, and I like to think, that had Count d’Orsay

fallen into good hands, he might have been a good many things he was not. Unfortunate circumstances, which entangled him as with a fatal web from his early youth, dragged him downwards and led him step by step to his ruin. On these peculiar circumstances I shall not dwell. They are known to all, and cannot be palliated. But he was a grand creature in spite of all this; beautiful as the Apollo Belvedere in his outward form, full of health, life and spirits, wit and gaiety, radiant and joyous, the admired of all admirers—such was d’Orsay when I first knew him. If the Count had been born with a fortune of a hundred thousand pounds a year, he would have been a great man. He loved money, not for money’s sake, but for what it could procure. He was generous even to ostentation, and he had a real pleasure in giving even what he himself had borrowed. He was born with princely tastes and ideas, and would have heartily despised a man who could have sat down contented in a simple dwelling-place with a bad cook and a small competence. . . . He was rather above six feet in height, and when I first knew him he might have served as a model for statuary. His neck was long, his shoulders broad, his waist narrow . . . nothing could surpass the beauty of his feet and ankles. His dark chestnut hair hung naturally in long waving curls; his forehead was high and wide, his features regular, and his complexion glowed with radiant health. His eyes were large and of a light hazel colour; he had very full lips and white teeth, but a little apart; which sometimes gave to the generally amiable expression of his countenance a rather cruel and sneering look, such as one sees in the heads of some of the old Roman Emperors. . . . He was a fine horseman, a good swordsman, a fair shot. . . . Though his tastes, pursuits and habits were

thoroughly manly, yet he took as much care of his beauty as a woman might have done. He was in the habit of taking perfumed baths, and his friends remember the enormous gold dressing-case which it required two men to carry, and which used to be the companion of all his excursions. Peace be to his ashes! it will be long before the world looks upon his like again.'

Of the older generation of dandies, the relics of the days of Brummell and the Regent, Gronow writes:

'How unspeakably odious—with a few brilliant exceptions, such as Alvanley and others—were the dandies of forty years ago. They were a motley crew, with nothing remarkable about them except their insolence. They were generally not high-born, nor rich, nor very good-looking, nor clever, nor agreeable; and why they arrogated to themselves the right of setting up their own fancied superiority on a self-raised pedestal, and despising their betters, Heaven only knows. They were generally middle-aged, even elderly men, had large appetites and weak digestions, gambled freely, and had no luck. They hated everybody and abused everybody, and would sit together in White's bay window, or the pit boxes at the Opera, weaving tremendous crammers. They swore a good deal, never laughed, looked lazy after dinner, and had most of them been patronised at one time or another by Brummel or the Prince Regent.'

The dandy might, of course, be a wit as well. Such a one was Lord Alvanley, whom Gronow describes:

'I much doubt whether the year 1789 did not produce the greatest wit of modern times, in the person of William, Lord Alvanley.

'Alvanley entered the Coldstream Guards at an early age, and served with distinction at Copenhagen and in

the Peninsula; but being in the possession of a large fortune, he left the army, gave himself up entirely to the pursuit of pleasure, and became one of the principal dandies of the day. . . . Not only was Alvanley considered the wittiest man of his day in England, but during his residence in France . . . he was universally admitted to possess not only wit and humour, but *l'esprit français* in its highest perfection. He was one of the rare examples (particularly rare in the days of the dandies, who were generally sour and spiteful) of a man combining brilliant wit and repartee with the most perfect good nature. His manner above all was irresistible; and the slight lisp, which might have been considered as a blemish, only added piquancy to his sayings.

'In appearance he was about the middle height, and well and strongly built, though he latterly became somewhat corpulent. . . . His face had somewhat of the rotund form and smiling expression which characterises the jolly friars one meets with in Italy. . . . He resided in Park Street, St. James's, and his dinners there and at Shelton were considered to be the best in England. . . .

'He fought a duel with Morgan O'Connell (son of the Liberator) on Wimbledon Common, where several shots were fired without effect. On their way home in a hackney coach, Alvanley said, "What a clumsy fellow O'Connell must be, to miss such a fat fellow as I am! He ought to practise at a haystack to get his hand in." When the carriage drove up to his door, he gave the coachman a sovereign. "It's a great deal for only having taken your lordship to Wimbledon." "No, my good man—I give it to you, not for taking me, but for bringing me back."

'Alvanley had a delightful recklessness and *laissez*

aller in everything. His manner of putting out the light at night was not a very pleasant one for his host for the time being. He always read in bed, and when he wanted to go to sleep, he either extinguished his candle by throwing it on the floor in the middle of the room and taking a shot at it with the pillow, or else quietly placed it, when still lighted, under the bolster. . . . His recklessness in money matters was almost incredible. His creditors having become at last very clamorous, that able and astute man of the world Mr. Charles Greville, with the energetic and bustling kindness in mixing himself up in his friends' affairs which still distinguishes him, had undertaken to settle those of Albanley. After going through every item of the debts, matters looked more promising than Mr. Greville expected, and he took his leave. In the morning he received a note from Albanley to say he had quite forgotten to take into account a debt of fifty-five thousand pounds. . . . When he succeeded to his father's fortune, he inherited an income of eight thousand pounds a year. When he died, he did not leave to his brother, who succeeded to the title, above two thousand.'

Dressing and talking are social arts that require an audience. The Dandy delighted to display himself of a morning in Hyde Park; the Wit flourished at dinner tables and social gatherings. But both Wit and Dandy seem to have shone their brightest in the exclusive circle of the great London clubs.

There were at this time only twenty-six clubs in London, of which the total membership was barely a thousand. A writer in the *New Monthly Magazine* of 1835 gives us the list. They were Albion, Alfred, Arthur's, Athenæum, Boodle's, Brooks', Carlton, Clarence, Cocoa-

Tree, Crockford's, Garrick, Graham's, Guards', Oriental, Oxford and Cambridge, Portland, Royal Naval, Travelers', Union, United Services, Junior United Service, University, West Indian, White's, Windham. To these we must add the Reform Club, founded in 1837.

The Athenæum has not changed much in the course of a century. In 1837 we hear that members complained of the new gas lighting, which produced such an atmosphere in the dining-room that no one without copper lungs could hope to survive. The Alfred and the Clarence were literary clubs; the Garrick was mainly theatrical. The Oriental was famous for its curry, and for the crimson complexions of members who had seen service in India, whereas the prevailing complexion at the West Indian was said to be lemon yellow. The Windham was the first club to allow strangers to dine.

In exclusiveness the clubs rivalled *Almack's*. Only in very exceptional circumstances could anyone connected with trade aspire to enter them. The membership consisted mainly of fashionable men of no occupation, members of the Services, and the professions of law and the church.

But perhaps the most distinctive feature of club life in the last century was the gambling. Brooks' and White's had a long tradition of high play, the latter was Brummell's favourite resort. Other clubs where high play took place were Boodles, Arthur's, the Guards, Graham's, and most famous and ruinous of all, Crockford's. The proprietor of this last was a former fishmonger, and his special abilities appear to have been a remarkable facility for mental arithmetic and an extremely tenacious memory. Otherwise he was commonly supposed to be virtually illiterate. His mental quickness

enabled him to calculate odds at a glance; his memory served to retain the financial history of his patrons, their losses and future prospects, so that he knew just how far it was advisable to advance them money, indeed he is said to have been a 'walking Doomsday Book'. Crockford was never accused of any form of cheating, and was probably far too astute to require it. His premises were noted for their sumptuousness, in an age of extravagant taste; his chef Ude was said to be paid £1,000 a year. In 1840 he retired a millionaire, and Disraeli writes: 'One great resignation has occurred. Last night Crockford sent a letter announcing his retirement. 'Tis a thunderbolt, and nothing else is talked of. 'Tis the greatest shock to domestic credit since Howard and Gibbs. Some members are twelve years in arrears of subscriptions. One man owed £700 to the coffee room. All must now be booked up. The consternation is general.'

Here is Captain Gronow's description of this famous club, where he and most of his friends ruined themselves so thoroughly that they had to live abroad:

'One may safely say, without exaggeration, that Crockford's won the whole of the ready money of the then existing generation. . . . The tone of the club was excellent. A most gentlemanlike feeling prevailed. . . . The great foreign diplomats and all persons of distinction who arrived in England belonged to Crockford's as a matter of course; but many rued the day when they became a member of that fascinating but dangerous coterie. The great Duke himself, always rather a friend of the dandies, did not disdain to appear now and then at this charming club. The two great novelists of the day, who have since become great statesmen, displayed at that supper-table the one his sable, the other his auburn

curls. There might be noted the scientific dribbling of a four by "King" Allen, the tremendous backing of nines and fives by Ball Hughes and Auriol, the enormous stakes played for by Lords Lichfield and Chesterfield, George Payne, Sir St. Vincent Cotton, d'Orsay, and George Anson, and above all the gentlemanly bearing and calm and unmoved demeanour, under losses or gains, of all men of that generation.'

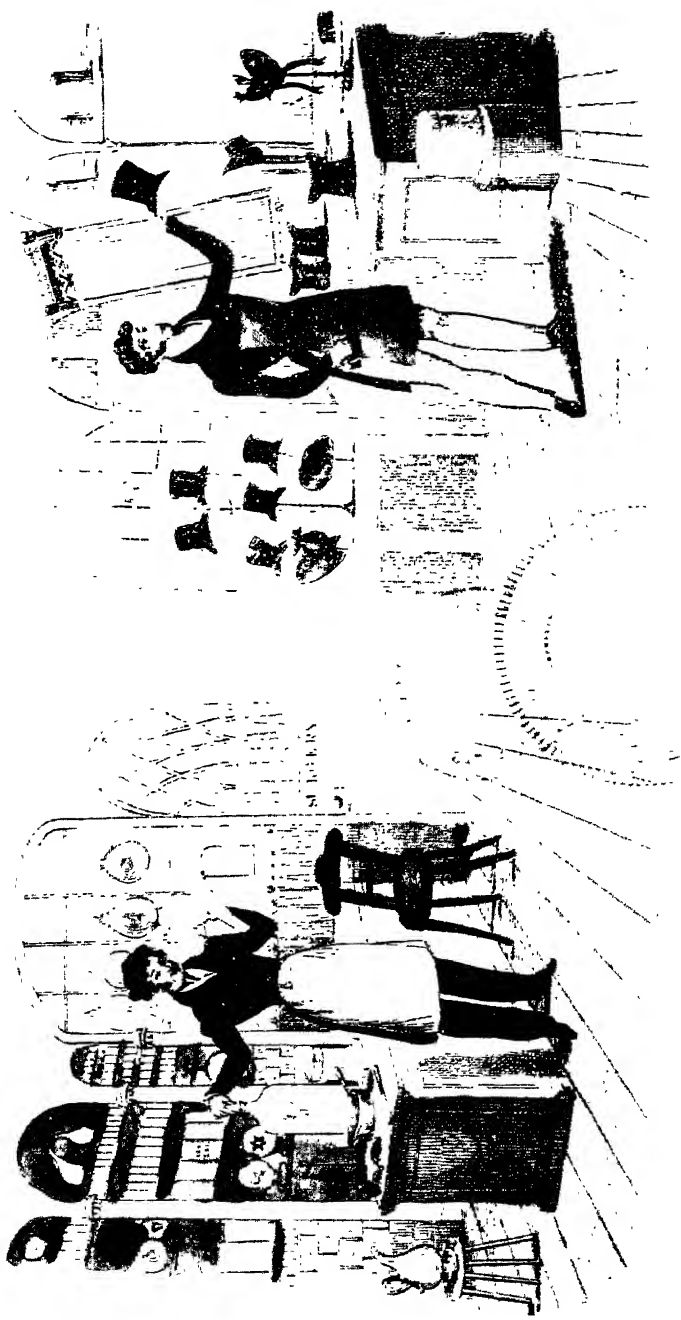
D'Orsay's play was famous even in that circle. He spent the last eight years of his life in England, in voluntary incarceration in the grounds of Gore House, only venturing out after dark and on Sundays, when he was free from the risk of arrest. Yet he played on.

It was not necessary to gamble to be a member. Lord Lamington writes:

'The custom, if members like myself partook frequently of the supper and never played, was at the close of the season to throw a ten-pound note on the play-table and leave it there. But that was really conscience-money; no one enquired, asked for it, or perhaps even noticed it.'

From Captain Gronow we get pen portraits of some of the more famous players. They were clubmen and gamblers pure and simple; we do not hear of their distinguishing themselves in other walks of life.

'King' Allen. 'The late Viscount Allen, commonly called King Allen, was a well-known character in London for many years. He was a tall, stout and pompous looking personage, remarkably well got up with an invariably new-looking hat and well-polished boots. His only exercise and usual walk was from White's to Crockford's, and from Crockford's to White's. . . . Lord Allen greatly resembled in later life an ancient grey parrot,



22. Valentines, The Chymist and The Draper



25. Valentine. The Barmaid

both in the aquiline outline of his features, and his peculiar mode of walking, with one foot crossed over the other in a slow and wary manner. He was a regular Cockney, and very seldom left London; but on one occasion, when he had gone down with Alvanley to Dover for the sake of his health and complained to his facetious friend that he could get no sleep, Alvanley ordered a coach to drive up and down in front of the inn windows all night, and made the boots call out, in imitation of the London watchman of that day, 'Half past two, and a stormy night!' The well-known rumble of wheels and the dulcet tones of the boots had the desired effect; the "King" passed excellent nights. . . .

'Lord Allen was at last obliged to leave London, after coming to an understanding with his creditors; and after passing some time at Cadiz, died at Gibraltar in 1846.'

'Golden' Ball Hughes. 'I was at Eton with my late friend Ball Hughes, whose recent death was so much lamented in Paris. He was a remarkably handsome man, and made a considerable figure in the best society; his manners were excellent, he was a thoroughly amiable, agreeable fellow, and universally popular. His uncle, Admiral Hughes, left him the fortune he had amassed during his command of the fleet on the Indian seas, and which was supposed to be not less than forty thousand a year. [At the time of his death] his fortune had dwindled down to a fourth of its original amount, for he was perhaps the greatest gambler of his day. His love of play was such, that at one period of his life he would rather play at pitch and toss than be without his favourite excitement. He told me that at one time he had lost considerable sums at battledore and shuttlecock. On one

occasion he and the eccentric Lord Petersham commenced playing with these toys, and continued hard at work during the whole of the night; next morning he was found by his valet lying on the ground, fast asleep but ready for any other species of speculation.'

Scrope Davies. 'Few men were better received in society or more the fashion than he once was . . . his manners and appearance were of the true Brummell type: there was nothing showy in his exterior . . . he was the life and soul of those who relished learning and wit.

'As was the case with many of the foremost men of that day, the greater number of his hours were spent at the gaming-table, where for a length of time he was eminently successful; for he was a first-rate calculator. He seldom played against individuals; he preferred going to the regular establishments. . . . The time arrived when Fortune deserted her old favourite; and shortly after the Dandy dynasty was overthrown, he found himself unable to mingle with the rich, the giddy and the gay. With the wreck of his fortune, and indeed little to live upon beyond the amount of his own Cambridge Fellowship, he sought repose in Paris. . . .'

'Apollo' Raikes, who, owing to his City connection, rose in the East and set in the West amongst the clubs, 'Poodle' Byng and Gronow himself were other famous figures. Of course not all the *habitués* were so fascinated as to squander their whole fortunes, but many a rising young man, such as Disraeli or Bulwer, crippled himself financially for years afterwards. Occasionally men broke down completely under the strain. Young Lord de Ros, being heavily involved, was caught cheating at Graham's Club. The news reached the scandal sheets of the time

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and after the revelations of a libel suit, he had to leave England, dying abroad within a few months of his disgrace.





IX. WOMEN



In 1837 there was no reason why a woman should not know what to do in all circumstances, for books of instruction on every subject abounded.

‘ETIQUETTE FOR THE LADIES

Eighty Maxims on Dress, Manners and Accomplishments

Fourth Edition.

London 1837

Preface

‘Was the fair reader ever in doubt and uncertainty as to how it was proper to comport herself in the circumstances in which she was placed? If so, she will be able to appreciate the value of the hints contained in the following maxims. Let not the initiated sneer at them as crude and commonplace; things which are sometimes presumed to be known to everybody are often, after all, but imperfectly understood.

‘The frequent and sudden changes in the observance of fashionable life render a little manual of this sort

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necessary to guard those who move not in the immediate circle of society in which such usages originate, from the violation of laws which, though often of the most ephemeral existence, are, for the time being, regarded with feelings of almost superstitious regard, and any departure from which is sure to subject the unhappy culprit to ridicule and contempt. It is hoped that, in the narrow space to which these Maxims have been limited, enough has been said to enable the reader to vindicate her claim to a knowledge of the courtesies of life as practised in the most polished and fashionable society. . . .

‘It is not considered proper for ladies to wear gloves during dinner. To appear in public without them—to sit in church or in a place of public amusement destitute of these appendages, is decidedly vulgar. Some gentlemen insist upon stripping off their gloves before shaking hands—a piece of barbarity of which no lady will be guilty.

‘If you want to be thoroughly vulgar and *distinguée*, make your knife do duty in the treble capacity of knife, fork and spoon—bumper off the glasses of wine to which you may be helped, and eat voraciously of every dish that is presented at table. You may then pause for a few seconds and consider what other *bêtise* may be necessary to vindicate your claim to the honour to which you aspire!

‘In receiving morning visitors, it is not necessary that the lady should lay aside the employment in which she may be engaged, particularly if it consists of light or ornamental needlework. Politeness, however, requires that music, drawing, or any occupation which would completely engross the attention, be at once abandoned.

‘Every lady of proper feeling, however fascinating she

may deem her personal charms, will carefully eschew that scanty longitude of dress which is allowable in opera-dancers and theatrical *figurantes* only. . . .

‘It is not only absurd, it is in bad taste, for people of inadequate means to ape the manners of the great. . . .

‘Ladies of short stature should never allow the trimmings of their gowns to trespass half-way to the knee.

‘In full dress, watered or variegated bands must be laid aside; those of satin or gauze ribbon being then considered the proper material.

‘Scarcely anything is so repulsive in a lady, so utterly plebeian, as speaking in a loud, harsh voice. . . .

‘*American etiquette.* The most recent and approved mode of breaking ground with a lady runs somewhat after this fashion: “Madam,” says the love-lorn swain, “will you so far undervaley (undervalue) yourself as to overvaley me as to permit me to keep company with you?” The gracious answer is: “No undervaleyment at all, Sir!”

‘In speaking to her husband, a lady may address him by his Christian name. In speaking of him to others, it is more proper to style him Mr. ——. To degrade him to a mere initial, to call him Mr. A. or Mr. B. is worse than vulgar, it is heathenish.

‘In writing to persons of rank and title, a difficulty sometimes occurs as to the proper mode of addressing them. The wives of gentlemen . . . are distinguished by the Christian name of their husband, *not* by his professional name or rank, as Mrs. Doctor ———, Mrs. Captain ———, which is considered vulgar.

‘*N.B.*—Never use a wafer; it is a nasty and unladylike custom, and is allowable by tradespeople only, in the hurry of business.

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‘Fish is always eaten with a fork only, etiquette having discarded the knife from taking its share in the operation; or rather the fork having assumed the place of the knife, leaving a crust of bread to perform its duty. . . . The propriety of adopting a *silver* fork is obvious, but the affection of those who insist on using a fork only, even when it is a steel one, is absurd. Silver forks are now too common to render the necessity of using a steel one an affair of very frequent occurrence.

‘*N.B.*—In first-rate society, silver knives are now beginning to be used for fish; a very pleasing as well as decided step in the progress of refinement.

‘Good taste forbids too lavish a display of ornament. Do not make your appearance “hung in chains”.

‘At dinner-parties it is considered a point of etiquette for the hostess to be less richly dressed than when she appears as a guest.

‘Modern manners do not sanction the departure of the ladies from the dinner table so early as was customary among our forefathers. The rougher sex (they will pardon the expression) are not now accustomed so frequently to press the indulgences of the table to the verge of inebriety as was customary in the past age. The proper time for retiring is best left to the judgment of the hostess. She should, however, never delay it so long that the gentlemen may wish for her absence; nor depart so soon as to relieve them from the elevating influence of female society.

‘Coloured shoes are not considered consistent with good taste, though delicate pink and faint blue have each their advocates.

‘. . . In carving, study ease and grace, carefully avoiding anything like effort; nothing is a surer mark of

vulgarity and low breeding than a noisy and awkward use of your knife and fork.

‘To press your guests to take more than they have a mind to is antiquated and rude. This does not, however, prevent your recommending particular dishes to their attention. Everything like compulsion is quite exploded.

‘The proper hours for morning visits are from 2 to 5. The late hours now fashionable render a more early visit inconvenient; later, you might disturb the domestic arrangements of the family. . . .

‘In the arrangement of the hair, due regard must be had to the style of the features. Large massive features require masses of curl. *Petite* features, on the contrary, admit of the graceful and fascinating arrangement of ringlets. . . .

‘In taking leave of her visitors, the lady of the house . . . curtsies or shakes hands according to the degree of intimacy; and, ringing for the servant, suffers them to be conducted out of the house.

‘Never use your knife to convey your food from your plate to your mouth; besides being decidedly vulgar, you run the imminent danger of enlarging the aperture. . . . Whenever you find a fork inefficient, use a spoon.

‘It is almost unnecessary just to hint that the introductions which are made at public balls are for the night only.

‘Be not conspicuously careful about the safety of your dress in company, lest it be supposed you carry your wardrobe on your back. . . .

‘Never in conversation repeat the title of the person addressed too frequently . . . an occasional “Your Ladyship” just to show that you recognise and respect her rank is all that the dictates of good taste allow.

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‘Simplicity of action as well as of ornament is the surest test of real refinement; to be always in ecstasies is both unnatural and vulgar . . . *etc., etc.*’

‘THE HOUSEKEEPER’S ORACLE

by the late

WILLIAM KITCHINER, M.D.

The Cost of a Wife.

Breakfast: bread, 1d., butter, 1d., tea & sugar, 1½d., gin, 2d.	5½d.
Dinner: four ounces of meat, 1½d., garden stuff, ½d., beer, 1d.	3d.
Tea in the afternoon: bread and butter, 2d., tea & sugar, ½d.	3½d.
Supper: bread, 1d., cheese, 1d., beer, 1d. snuff, ½d.	3½d.
<hr/>	
	1s. 3½d.

‘. . . The Company of *Bons Vivants* never allow that they can be Drunk while they are so Sober that they can be upon the Ground without *holding*! . . .

‘How to engage a servant. If you cannot get a person recommended by a Friend, or the Baker, Butcher, Poulterer, Green Grocer, Milkman, etc., Apply to the Free Registry of the London Society for the encouragement of faithful Female Servants. . . . The Society is formed to promote the Moral and Religious improvement of Servants—to encourage them to be correct and trustworthy in their conduct, and to abide as long as possible in the same service; by these means to promote mutual goodwill and friendship between servants and their Employers. Various Rewards are proposed for long-continued service in the same family; the commencement

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of which is calculated from the day the Subscribers direct the *names* of such Servants to be inserted in the Society's Books for that express purpose. But each Subscriber of a guinea may recommend one Servant to receive a Bible or Testament on her completing her first year's service, provided the Subscription has been so long previously made.

'Some Mistresses allow to each Servant a whole Holy-day every third Month, and a half Holyday in each intervening Month, requiring them to return, on the whole Holyday, before 10 o'clock in the Summer, and before 8 o'clock in the Winter.

'Many Housekeepers fancy that they gain a great point by making an Agreement with their Servants that they shall have

NO FOLLOWERS.

However excellent this may be as a general Rule, I strongly recommend excepting from it occasional visits from *Relations*, especially from the *Mothers and Sisters of Female Servants*. Most Servants find their own Tea and Sugar; and a bit of bread and butter is a trifling consideration to a Housekeeper, compared to the comfort given to a good Servant; and it may be one of your Rewards to occasionally permit such an invitation to be given; but strictly forbid any visitor entering your kitchen till the Parlour Dinner is entirely sent up, or the Cook may be as likely to be playing polite to her own guests as to be taking care of your Dinner . . . *etc., etc.*

'Park's *New Egyptian Dream Book or Dreamers' Oracle* provided elaborate instructions. Its title page could not but inspire confidence, "clearly showing how all things past, present and to come may be ascertained

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by DREAMS: translated from an old manuscript found at Thebes." Here are some items:

'Bathing. In a river, signifies good fortune; in a pond, is very unlucky; in muddy water, crosses and suffering.

'Cards. If you dream you are playing at cards, it denotes that you will soon be in love. If you hold a great many court cards, if you are single, you will soon be married; if there are spades amongst them, you will fall into trouble on account of your gratifications in love; if the most of them are clubs, you will gain a fortune by marriage; if they are hearts, you will marry for love and be very happy; if diamonds, your companion will be of a sour disagreeable temper.

'Eggs. To dream you are buying eggs is ill luck; to boil, chitchat.

'Fish. If you dream you are fishing and catch none, you will court a person to whom you will never be married; if you catch them, you will be successful in love; if they slip out of your hands, the person you are united to will be of a very lewd disposition, or your best beloved friends will betray you.

'House. To dream one builds a house denotes comfort. Dreaming of building houses, wearing fine clothes, and talking with ladies, is a sign that the parties will suddenly marry.

'Images. Dreaming you make images of men, denotes you will shortly be married and have many children, and very like yourselves.

'Nose. Dreaming one has a fair and great nose, is good to all, for it implies subtlety of sense, providence in affairs, and acquaintance with great persons. But to dream one has no nose means the contrary; and to a sick man, death. If anyone dream his nose is larger than

ordinary, he will become rich and powerful, provident and subtle, and be well received among grantees. Dreaming one has two noses implies discords and quarrels. If one dreams that his nose is grown so big that it is deformed and hideous to the sight, he will live in prosperity and abundance, but never gain the love of the people. If any one dream his nose is stopped, so that he has lost his scent, if he be a king, he is in some imminent danger from him that hath the greatest authority about his person.'

Full moral and social instruction was provided by Mrs. John Sandford in *Woman in her Social and Domestic Character*.

'The sentiment for woman has undergone a change. The romantic passion, which once almost deified her, is on the decline; and it is by intrinsic qualities that she must now inspire respect.

'A woman may make a man's home delightful, and may thus increase his motives for virtuous exertion. She may refine and tranquillise his mind—may turn away his anger, or allay his grief. Where want of congeniality impairs domestic comfort, the fault is generally chargeable on the female side; for it is for woman, not for man, to make the sacrifice, especially in indifferent matters. She must, in a certain degree, be plastic herself, if she would mould others. And this is one reason why very good women are sometimes very uninfluential. They do a great deal, but they yield nothing; they are impassable themselves, and therefore they cannot affect others. . . .

'In everything that women attempt, they should show their consciousness of dependence. There is something

so unpleasant in female self-sufficiency, that it not unfrequently prejudices instead of persuading.

‘Their sex should ever teach them to be subordinate; and they should remember that, by them, influence is to be obtained, not by assumption, but by a delicate appeal to affection or principle. Women, in this respect, are something like children: the more they show their need of support, the more engaging they are. . . .

‘A woman may as well be without heart as without religion; and few men, however irreligious themselves, but would shrink from impiety in her; it involves a coldness and hardness of character offensive to both taste and feeling. Even when infidelity was more in vogue than it is at present, when it had almost monopolised talent and identified itself with enlightened sentiment, the few women who volunteered under its banner were treated with the contempt they deserved. The female Quixote broke her lance in vindicating the “Rights of Women”; and no one sympathised in her defeat. . . . Piety is so congenial to a woman, that, even in circles the least disposed to it, some profession of it, in her, is a matter of course. . . .

‘A woman’s virtues must be genuine. They are to expand, not in the sunshine, but in the shade; and, therefore, they need some vital principle to supply the place of foreign excitement. . . . It is the domesticating tendency of religion that especially prepossesses men in its favour, and makes them, even if indifferent to it themselves, desire it, at least, in their nearest female connections. . . .

‘How much more Christian is the course of uncomplaining meekness! True, this awakens little interest, it asks for no human sympathy. Perhaps, even, it may be

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mistaken by some for compliance, or compromise. But how great is its reward! . . .

‘When piety receives the accomplishment of its wishes—when the indulgence that has excused faults, the delicacy that has forborne complaint, and the kindness that has concealed infirmities, are at length appreciated; . . . it is then, even in this world, that the secret prayer is answered, and the secret tears are wiped away.

‘Vanity is by no means confined to fashionable life; even cultured minds are not exempt from it; and though the *Blue Stocking Club* exists no longer, women are not proof against the vanity of letters. They have indeed, in general, but little cause to be vain on this head, but it is sometimes because they have so little that they are so. The reputation of being a clever woman may be easily obtained. Less than a schoolboy’s learning is sufficient to confer it; Minerva’s pretty votaress lisps a page of Virgil, spells an ode of Horace, and is thought a prodigy of learning. . . .

‘The *bas bleu* is eager for notoriety, and avails herself of her requirements only to secure it. She does all she can to sustain her claims; she accumulates around her the materials of learning, and her very boudoir breathes an academic air. Its decorations are sufficient to proclaim her character; its shelves are filled with books of every tongue, its tables are strewn with the apparatus of science; the casket of jewels is displaced for the cabinet of stones, and the hammer and alembic occupy the stand allotted for the work-box. One niche glooms with a quartered skull; another is enriched by a classic statue; the easel stands in the background, and the harp is admitted to complete the picturesque. And she herself is in accordance with all this paraphernalia; and her

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conversation, dress and manner equally attest her eagerness to make good her pretensions to literary notoriety. . . .

‘And then, there are the pleasures of patronage. How delightful to be the female Maecenas! to open your house to the literati; to take by the hand the half-fledged poet, and the incipient artist; to draw to your *conversazione* the expatriated patriot, or the refugee royalist; the unturbaned Sultan or the wandering Greek; in short, to be the rendezvous of every wonder worth seeing, or not worth seeing, in the literary world!

‘The superiority of really cultivated women is, in everything, very apparent. They have been accustomed to think and to discriminate. They view every subject more calmly, and decide more dispassionately. A woman who, without reflection, takes up the views of others, is peculiarly accessible to party spirit; and this is one reason why woman, in general, are more zealous partisans than the other sex. We can quite understand the strictures of Addison on the female sectarists of his day; for though we have no patches now to mark our distinctions, the spirit of party is equally exclusive. Knowledge is very useful, especially now in these days of progress, when every class should be prepared for its advance and when even the female mind should be strengthened for the increase of light.

‘Religion was formerly, perhaps, more talked of than it is at present. Not only is it the heart-enlivening topic amongst Christian friends; but serious conversation is often the passport to society and the means of elevating individuals above their natural rank in life. There are thus many temptations to spurious piety, and there are many, too, to female vanity; for a slight proficiency in

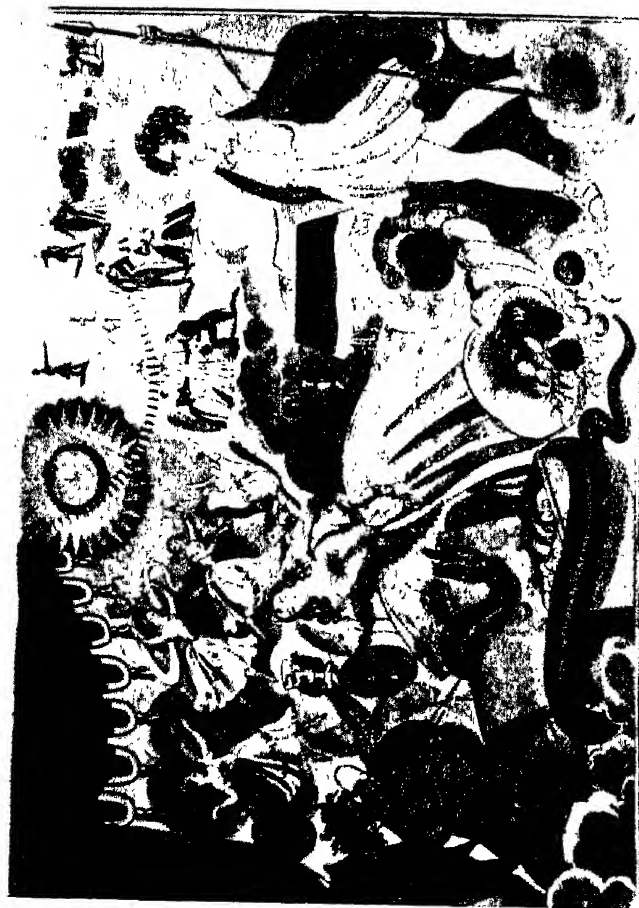
religious knowledge renders women fluent, and they may mistake mere facility of expression for real feeling. . . . It is of the more importance that women should guard against mistakes of this nature: since, partly from the increased interest evinced by them on religious subjects, and partly from the change that has taken place in their pursuits and habits, they now hold a higher place in religious society than they ever yet did. Men not infrequently defer to their judgment, because they feel the importance of this suffrage. . . .

‘It is indeed no wonder that young women should be so very clever nowadays. There are so many helps to learning, and steps to Parnassus; there are so many pioneers to pave the way, that it is a libel any longer to call it steep. If grammar be dry and abstruse, its necessity is superseded—if the dictionary be irksome, there is the interlined translation—if the classic author be obscure and ponderous, there are the lucid paraphrase and the elegant abridgment. Be the nut ever so hard, the kernel is extracted. Our very babies may suck the sweets of Froissart, Robertson and Hume; and follow with infantile curiosity the retreat of the Ten Thousand.

‘Youth is now such a very busy time. There are so many languages that must be learnt; so many accomplishments that must be mastered; so many sciences with which we must be familiar. A little while ago, French was a rare acquirement; but what girl now does not sigh with Filicaja, or weep with Klopstock? The versatility of female talent is, indeed, abundantly improved. Master succeeds to master, and class to class. The day of the scholar, like that of the instructor, is parcelled out into hours; and the sixth portion of each, which is cribbed by the former to run to a new pupil, is not un-



24. Reform Club Kitchen



25. Frontispiece to *The Book of Fate*, for interpreting Dreams

frequently all that is allowed to the latter to prepare for a new teacher. . . .

'It is quite different with boys. They are still kept, for the most part, to their old drudgery. It would be well if the same principle were acted on with regard to girls; if their education were more solid and less flashy, and if, instead of sipping like butterflies at every flower, they laid in a store of useful learning for future use. . . .

'A little girl is in this way often from her infancy trained to exhibit. She competes for the prize in the morning concert, and glitters in a silver medal, the envy of her class. In the evening she shows off to an admiring circle, and her heart dances time to her fingers as she listens to the applauding whispers which her execution calls forth. Her infantile sketches lie upon her mother's table; and when she is summoned from her schoolroom it is to play her last concerto to Mr. A., or to show her portfolio to Lady B. And can we wonder that the same habits should continue? . . .

'Most women are inclined to be romantic. Young women are peculiarly liable to enthusiasm of every kind. They are so gentle, so tender, so imaginative, and they have often so much leisure to indulge in reveries and ecstasies, that it is not to be wondered at that they should be occasionally somewhat visionary. . . . It is so distressing to see a young woman sighing and weeping and dreaming away her existence; one moment in an hysteric and another in a faint, always getting up a scene or supporting a part, that one is almost prepared to accede to any tirade against sentiment, the caricature of which is so truly absurd. . . .

'The increased attention bestowed upon female improvement is a proof of the superiority of the modern to

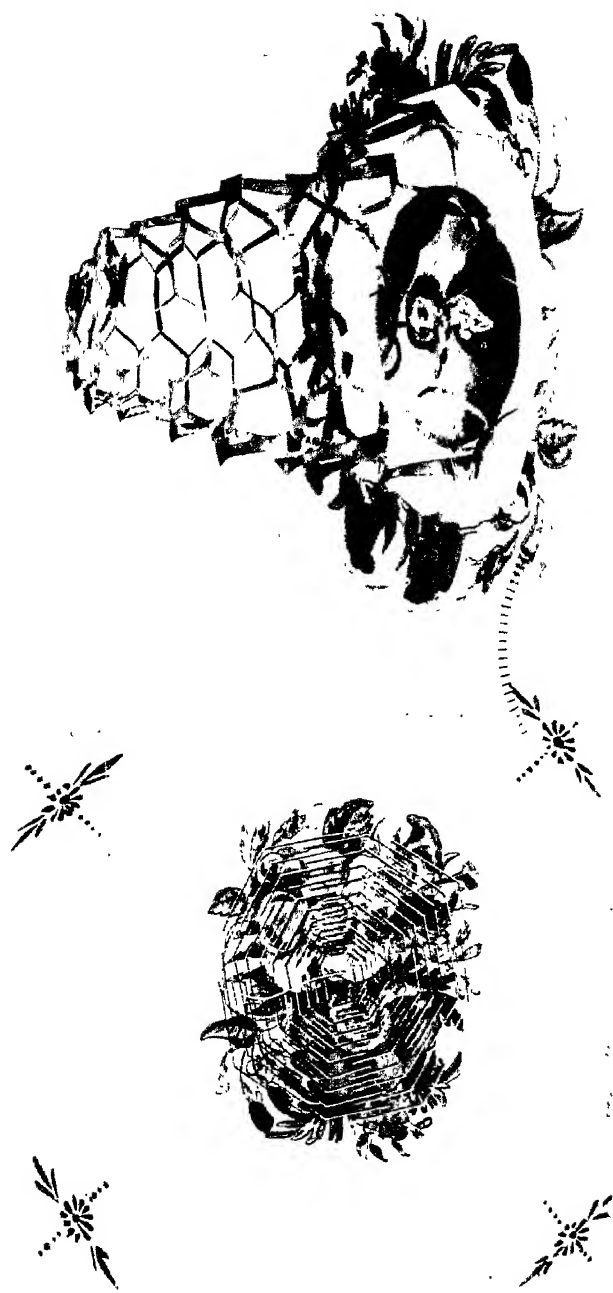
the ancient civilised world. One might almost say at present that the error lies in the contrary extreme. There are now a system and a routine to which every girl must be subjected. A few years ago this was by some extended even to bodily discipline.'

Fashionable girls' schools were run with a cheerful disregard for the health of the pupils. Dr. Caleb Tickner, in his *Guide to Mothers and Nurses*, makes recommendations which throw a light on the contemporary ideas of health and hygiene:

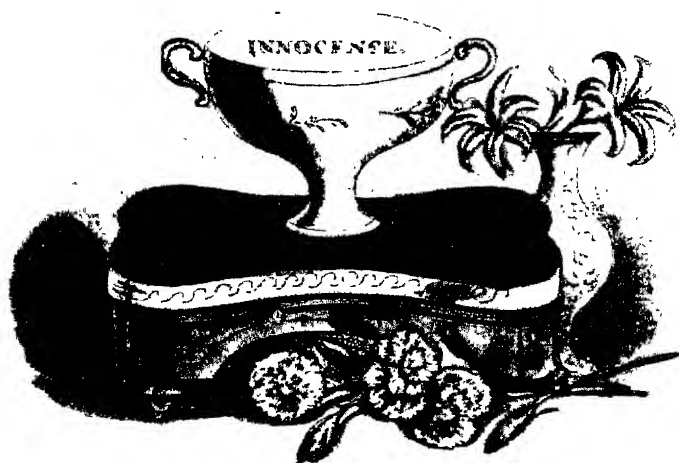
'The present boarding-school system of educating girls is open to the most serious objections; the greatest of which are the too long confinement and too little exercise.

'To gratify a whim of fashion . . . it is the custom, at what are called the *genteel boarding-schools*, to keep the young misses at their studies from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon, with an intermission of from fifteen minutes to half an hour. During this intermission, exercise is taken to little purpose, for the schools generally have not playgrounds sufficiently airy and extensive. A young lady's education comprises a smattering of so many subjects, and is condensed into so small a compass of time, that nearly all the hours out of school must be spent in hard study, and those studies are forced upon them without regard to natural taste or capacity. . . .

'The seats at young ladies' boarding schools, upon which they are confined so many hours a day, are without backs; and thus the muscles, whose office it is to keep the body erect, have a greater task imposed upon them than they can, for so long a time, perform; a curvature



26. A Valentine. The Posy pulls up by a Thread to show a Portrait beneath



27. Two Pictures from *The Ladies' Toilet Book*.
Each article has a flap that lifts to display an

* WOMEN *

of the spine is the consequence, at first, and consumption may occur afterwards. . . .

‘Dr. Clark recommends that a warm bath should form an appendage to every young ladies’ boarding-school; and in addition to the bath I would urge the importance of having a gymnasium suitable for the age and sex of the scholars. . . . Battledore and the graces are excellent exercises for young ladies.’



Section of the Bonnet Carriage



X. CHILDREN



CHILDREN AT WORK

In his delightful *Boys' Country Book* Howett describes his first sight of a coal mine. It was at night.

'As I rode over a hill I suddenly perceived before me, in every direction, strange lights, that only seemed to make the darkness deeper. Melancholy sounds, as of groans and sighings, and wild lamentings, came upon my ear, and fell awfully upon my heart. I could perceive by the fires that blazed here and there in a hundred places, that a wild landscape was before me; and Burman, the young man I have mentioned, told me it was full of coal-pits; that these fires were burning by them; and that the sounds I heard were the sounds of the machinery by which the coal was drawn up, and of the steam-engines by which the pits were cleared of water. As we went on we soon approached one of the coal-pits, and a wild scene it was. In two or three tall cressets fires were flaming and flickering in the wind; on the ground

* CHILDREN *

other large fires were burning, and by their light I could see black figures standing or moving about. Around were other paler fires, that with a smothered force seemed burning dimly, and every now and then breaking up with a stream of flame, and then dying down again. The flames gleamed ruddily on the colliers: on their great wailing wheels and tall timbers; and on the immense stacks of coals that stood around. It required daylight and further acquaintance with the place and people to dispel my awe. . . .

‘At length I mustered courage to go down a pit—yes, down one of those dreadful gulfs of which no bottom could be seen, but up which came a thin blue vapour, and a sound of falling water. I was arrayed in a flannel frock such as the colliers all wear, lent me by a pit-boy, and a round-crowned hat without brim, well stuffed with hay. In this guise a collier seated himself on the chain, taking me on his knee. We were swung off over the pit-mouth. Oh! it was a terrible moment, and made me sick and giddy. The rope appeared to dwindle to a hair, and below I dared not look, but I thought to what a horrible unknown depth I was going! Down, however, we went. Around us gushed water from the bricks which lined the side of the pit, and fell with a dreary, splashing sound far, far below. Anon I looked up—the daylight appeared only a small circular intense speck, like a star above me; and presently I heard below human voices sounding deeply like echoes. To my vast delight we soon felt the solid ground beneath us. A collier unhooked my protector from his chain, and we stood at the entrance of a region of darkness. . . . In these underground regions they have ponies and asses that do not see daylight for

* CHILDREN *

years; and they have stables for them made of coal . . . they have abundance of rats too . . . they keep cats . . . but in spite of this you would laugh to see a troop of rats come, while the colliers are holing, and run and jump at the lighted candles by which they are working which they stick with a bit of clay to the face of the coal, and will snatch them down and scamper away in different directions with them burning in their mouths.

‘Many a peril do these poor colliers undergo. Sometimes the choke-damp . . . comes and suffocates them, and they fall dead on the floor. To escape this, they carefully observe their candles, which burn blue on its approach, and gradually go out. Sometimes the more terrible fire-damp . . . kindled by their candles, in a moment fills all the pit with one sheet of flame, and they perish by scores like so many scorched insects. Sir Humphry Davy, the great chemical philosopher, invented a lamp, made of wire gauze, by which the men may work in safety, for the fire-damp will not kindle at it; but in too many pits this excellent lamp is not used, and so the lives of numbers are lost through their masters’ avarice or their own neglect.’

In some coal mines not only men and ponies were employed, but children of all ages and either sex. The conditions under which they worked sound so impossible today that it seems best to give the accounts laid before the Government by their own Commissioners in 1842 rather than those of private observers.

The Commissioners tell us that in the West Riding ‘the chief employment of Children and Young Persons in the coal mines is in attending to the trap doors, driving the horses along the main gates, attending to the jenny, and conveying the coals from the bank faces to the shaft,

* CHILDREN *

where there are no horses, and to the tram roads where there are any.'

The youngest children were employed as trappers, important work, for on the proper closing of the door depended the safety of the pit. 'The trappers sit in a little hole scooped out for them in the side of the gates behind each door, and pull it open the moment they hear the corves (carriages for conveying the coal) at hand, and the moment it has passed they let the door fall to, which it does of its own weight. If anything impedes the shutting of the door they remove it, or, if unable to do so, run to the nearest man to get him to do it for them. They have nothing else to do, but their office must be performed from the repassing of the first to the repassing of the last corve during the day; they sit in the pit the whole time it is worked, frequently above twelve hours a day. They sit, moreover, in the dark, often with a damp floor to stand on, and exposed necessarily to draughts. It is a most painful thing to contemplate the dull dungeonlike life these little creatures are doomed to spend—a life, for the most part, passed in solitude, damp and darkness. They are allowed no light, but sometimes a good-natured collier will bestow a little bit of candle on them, as a treat. On one occasion, as I was passing a little trapper, he begged me for a little grease from my candle. I found that the poor child had scooped out a hole in a great stone, and having obtained a wick, had manufactured a sort of rude lamp; and that he kept it going as well as he could by begging contributions of melted tallow from the candles of any Samaritan passers-by. To be in the dark, in fact, seemed to be the great grievance with all of them. . . .

'John Saville, seven years old, collier boy at the Soap

Pit, Sheffield: "I stand and open and shut the door; I'm generally in the dark and sit me down against the door; I stop twelve hours in the pit; I never see daylight now, except on Sundays; I fell asleep one day and a corve ran over my leg and made it smart; they'd squeeze me against the door if I fall asleep again. . . ."

In South Wales a little trapper, aged seven and a half, startled the Commissioners: 'I have been down about three years. When I first went down I couldn't keep my eyes open. I don't fall asleep now; I smoke my pipe; smoke half a quartern a week.' But as a rule the children were 'very shy' and their money went to their parents.

From trappers, the older children became 'hurriers', propelling and drawing tubs laden with coal. In Lancashire and Cheshire: "This is done by placing the hands on the back of the waggon, and propelling it forward with as great a velocity as the inclination of the mine, the state of the road, and the strength of the waggons admit of. The mines in this district are for the most part laid with rails. . . . There are, however, mines throughout the district where the old mode of drawing the baskets on wooden sledges is still retained. The drawer is in this case harnessed by means of a chain attached to the sled; the other end of the chain passes between his legs and fastens in front to a belt round the waist. . . .'

The passage is too low to stand upright, and so 'moving along on his hands and knees, the drawer drags after him the loaded basket. . . . The weight of the loaded tubs or waggons varies in the different mines in the district from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 cwt., but in those mines where they are drawn on sledges without wheels, the baskets are never more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 cwt. . . . In the thinner seams, many younger children are employed.'

* CHILDREN *

At Halifax: 'Girls from 5 to 18 perform all the work of boys. Indeed it is impossible to distinguish either in the darkness of the gates in which they labour or in the cabins before the broad light of day, an atom of difference between one sex and the other. . . .' Sub-Commissioner: 'I descended this pit accompanied by one of the banks-men. . . . The bottom was deep in mire. . . . I waited under the dripping shaft the arrival of the hurriers, as I had reason to suspect there were some very young children labouring there. . . . I could not have believed that I should have found human nature so degraded.'

The Commissioners caught a specimen (in the dark and dirt there was no distinguishing age or sex) and took it into the light. It proved to be a girl, Patience Kershaw.

'She stood shivering before me from cold. The rag that hung about her waist was once called a shift, which is as black as the coal she thrusts, and saturated with water. . . .'

She told the Commissioner: 'I hurry in the clothes I have now got on, trousers and ragged jacket; the bald place upon my head is made by thrusting the corves. . . . I hurry the corves a mile or more underground and back; they weigh 3 cwt.; I hurry 11 hours a day; I wear a belt and chain at the workings to get the corves out; the getters that I work for are naked except for their caps . . . sometimes they beat me if I am not quick enough.'

In the East of Scotland, where 'the persons employed in coal-bearing are almost always girls and women', a different method was used. 'A girl has first to descend a nine-ladder pit to the first rest, to which a shaft is sunk, to draw up the baskets or tubs of coal filled by the bearers; she then takes her creel (a basket formed to the back), not unlike a cockle-shell, flattened towards the neck, so

* CHILDREN *

as to allow lumps of coal to rest on the back of the neck and shoulders) and pursues her journey to the wall-face, or as it is called here, the room of work. She then lays down her basket, into which the coal is rolled, and it is frequently more than one man can do to lift the burden on her back. The tugs, or straps, are placed over the forehead, and the body bent in a semicircle form in order to stiffen the arch. Large lumps of coal are then placed on the neck, and she then commences her journey with her burden to the pit-bottom, first hanging her lamp to the cloth crossing her head. In this girl's case, she has first to travel about 14 fathoms (84 feet) from the wall-face to the first ladder, which is 18 feet high: leaving the first ladder, she proceeds along the main road, probably 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet 6 inches high, to the second ladder, 18 feet high, and so on to the third and fourth ladders, till she reaches the pit-bottom, where she casts her load, varying from 1 cwt. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwt., into a tub. This one journey is designated a rake; the height ascended and the distance along the roads added together, exceed the height of St. Paul's Cathedral; and it not infrequently happens that the tugs break, and the load falls upon those females who are following. However incredible it may be, yet I have taken the evidence of fathers who have ruptured themselves from straining to lift coal on their children's backs.'

Even worse off than the mining children were those working in the metalware trades round Birmingham. We read:

'The parents of the headers care little about them except to get their wages to spend in drink. On Saturday the father and mother have been known to get drunk and spend in one night nearly or entirely the whole of the

* CHILDREN *

wages earned by the toil and suffering, almost it might be said by the blood, of their children. A custom prevails of the masters lending money to the parents, which is repaid out of the labour of their children. One of these masters states that in most weeks he lends money to the parents; that this is regularly done; that most parents are always in debt; and that the children are kept to work out the debt of the parents. The same witness further states that it is common for parents to hire their children as headers usually for twelve months, or rather it is common to make the hiring for three years. No similar instance came under my notice in other trades.'

No wonder that the 'national interest in negro emancipation' irritated people who felt that a worse slavery was going on at home.

The way the children were treated depended both on the individual for whom they worked and also on the tone of the neighbourhood.

'In Sedgley they are sometimes struck with a red-hot iron, and burnt and bruised simultaneously; sometimes they have a "flash of lightning" sent at them. When a bar of iron is drawn white-hot from the forge, it emits fiery particles which the man commonly flings in a shower upon the ground by a swing of his arm before placing the bar upon the anvil. This shower is sometimes directed at the boy. It may come over his head or face, his naked arms, or on his breast. If his shirt be open in front, which is usually the case, the red-hot particles are lodged therein and he has to shake them out as fast as he can.'

'In Wednesbury the treatment is better than in any other town in the district. The boys are not generally subjected to any severe corporal chastisement, though a

* CHILDREN *

few cases of ill treatment occasionally occur. "A few months ago an adult workman broke a boy's arm by a blow with a piece of iron; this boy went to school till his arm got well, his father and mother thought it a good opportunity to give him some schooling." "

In Birmingham metal trades 'the class of children in this district the most abused and oppressed are the apprentices, and particularly those who are bound to the small masters among the locksmiths, key and bolt makers, screw makers, etc. Even among these smaller masters there are respectable and humane men who do not suffer any degree of poverty to render them brutal; but many of these men treat their apprentices not so much with neglect and harshness as with ferocious cruelty, the result of unbridled passions, excited often by ardent spirits acting on bodies exhausted by overwork, and on minds which have never received the slightest moral or religious culture, and which therefore never exercise the smallest moral or religious restraint.'

Here are a few instances given:

'——, aged 18: His master once ran at him with a hammer and drove the iron head of the hammer into his side—he felt it for weeks; his master often knocks him down on the shop-floor; he can't tell what it's all for, no more than you can; don't know what it can be for unless it's this, his master thinks he don't do enough work for him. When he is beaten, his master does not lay it on very heavy, as some masters do, only beats him for about five minutes at a time; should think that was enough, though.'

'——, aged 17 nearly: Works at rim-locks; is beaten nearly every other day; last time his master gave it him, he went up the garden and fetched two sticks down, and

* CHILDREN *

when he once begins he hardly ever knows when to leave off; he brought two sticks to use, one when the other wore out with beating him; the sticks are ashen plant, and twist round the body when they hit, and there's knots in them half an inch long; he mostly brings two sticks at a time, and threatens to bring half a dozen. This is because he does not do his work as well as he should do sometimes, but his master has no patience with a lad to learn; he does his work as well as he can, and he can't do it no better. His master once cut a piece out of his arm with a stick.'

Most of the children were abysmally ignorant. Here is one from Staffordshire. 'James Lavender, aged nine. Works in the rope-walk of Mr. Edward Griffin; works for one of the men; works from six in the morning till seven or eight at night, with but quarter of an hour for breakfast, half an hour for dinner; they have no tea.

'Has been about two months to the St. John's School; was at the Catholic chapel school before that; cannot read much; never was put to writing. Never heard of Jesus Christ—never heard the name. Has never heard of our Saviour—"not as he knows on". Was at the Catholic school for about a year; did not learn much, though. Has heard of Jim Crow; heard boys sing him (A handsome, healthy little boy, and quite as big as any of the others, who were eleven and twelve years of age. His work is all in the open air. Was clean and warmly clothed; did not look stupid, notwithstanding his ignorance; was not deaf, but seemed stolid.)'

But even ignorance was probably better than the plight of the factory children when the proprietors, with the best intentions, had founded a school and compelled their exhausted little employees to attend *after* their long working day.

* CHILDREN *

The factory children were rather better off than in the days when an overlooker could say 'I have seen them fall asleep and they have been performing their work with their hands after the Billy had stopped', or parents complain that when they went to get their children up in the morning they would be asleep with last night's supper still clasped in their hands.

Since the Factory Act night work had been prohibited for all children under 18, whilst the maximum hours for children under 13 were nine, and for Young Persons (children between 13 and 18) were twelve. But the Government was hesitant about more legislation, because shortening the hours of the factory children might indirectly shorten those of adult workmen and it would be monstrous tyranny to interfere with the freedom of any man's right to contract for as many hours' work as he wished. The factory owners were for the most part strongly averse to any interference, prophesying ruin. They sent a memorial to Mr. Fielden, their Member, to vote against any such Bill, but though Fielden was himself a factory owner, he put humanity first:

'I cannot help reminding the memorialists of what was said . . . by their then representative, my able and lamented colleague Mr. Cobbett, when the question of the Factory system was under consideration:

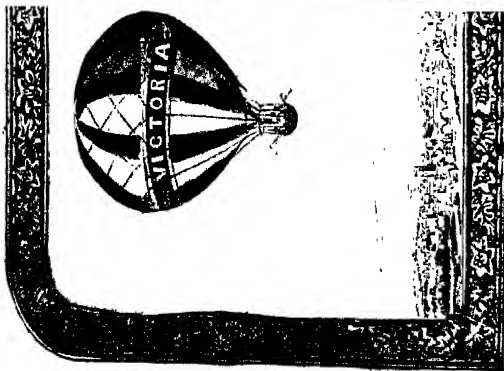
'Disencumbering the question of the maze of language, sometimes literal and sometimes figurative, in which it has been wrapped, it amounts to this—Mammon or Mercy? . . .

'I have only one observation to make, and I will not detain the House two minutes in doing so. We have, Sir, this night made one of the greatest discoveries ever made by a House of Commons, a discovery which will be



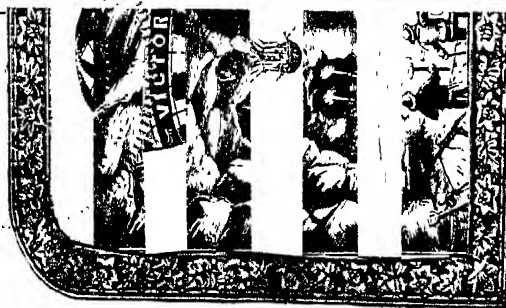
28. Children at Play. From a Children's Book

EARTH.



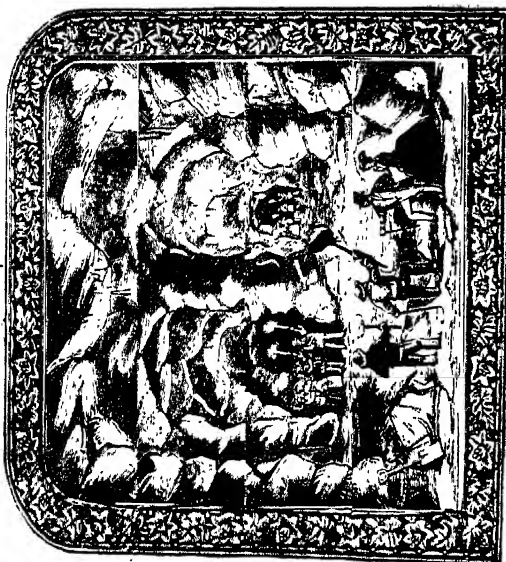
MAX, though so feeble at 1
Explores the lowest depths
Balloons enable him to dare
The lofty region of the

EARTH.



MAX, though so feeble
Explores the lowest
Balloons enable him
The lofty region.

EARTH.



MAX, though so feeble at his birth,
Explores the lowest depths of EARTH;
Balloons enable him to dare
The lofty region of the AIR.

29. 'Earth and Air.' A Dissolving View from a Children's Book, when the Thread is pulled the Picture changes

hailed by the constituents of the Hon. gentlemen behind me with singular pleasure. Hitherto, we have been told that our navy was the glory of the country, and that our maritime commerce and extensive manufactures were the mainstays of the realm. We have also been told that the land had its share in our greatness, and should justly be considered as the pride and glory of England. The Bank, also, has put in its claim to share in this praise, and has stated that public credit is due to it; but now a most surprising discovery has been made, namely that all our greatness and prosperity, that our superiority over other nations, is owing to 300,000 little girls in Lancashire. We have made the notable discovery that, if these little girls work two hours a day less than they do now, it would occasion the ruin of the country; that it would enable other nations to compete with us; and thus make an end to our boasted wealth and bring us to beggary.'

An equally trenchant exposure of bitter paradoxes is to be found in Sydney Smith's article on 'Chimney Sweeps':

'An excellent and well-arranged dinner is a most pleasing occurrence, and a great triumph of civilised life. It is not only the descending morsel, and the enveloping sauce—but the rank, wealth, wit and beauty which surround the meats—the learned management of light and heat—the silent and rapid services of the attendants—the smiling and sedulous host, proffering gusts and relishes—the exotic bottles—the embossed plate—the pleasant remarks—the handsome dresses—the cunning artifices in fruit and farina! The hour of dinner, in short, includes everything of sensual and intellectual gratification which a great nation glories in producing.

* CHILDREN *

‘In the midst of all this, who knows that the kitchen chimney caught fire half an hour before dinner!—and that a poor little wretch, of six or seven years old, was sent up in the midst of the flames to put it out? We could not, previous to reading this evidence, have formed a conception of the miseries of these poor wretches, or that there should exist, in a civilised country, a class of human beings destined to such extreme and varied distress.

‘Boys are made chimney sweepers at the early age of five or six.

‘*Little boys for small flues*, is a common phrase on the cards left at the door by itinerant chimney sweepers. Flues made to ovens and coppers are often less than nine inches square; and it may easily be conceived, how slender the frame of that human body must be, which can force itself through such an aperture.’

This was written in 1819, yet on June 3rd, 1838, *Bell's Life in London & Sporting Chronicle* reports that:

‘. . . an inquest was held at the Town Hall, Derby, on the body of Enoch Hind, a chimney-sweeper, in the employ of John Fantom. From the evidence, it appeared that the deceased, who was about 11 years of age, went with one of Fantom's journeymen to sweep a chimney at the house of Mrs. Pipes, as he had often done before. Mrs. Pipes, in evidence, stated that there was no fire in the grate at the time the boy went up the chimney, the journeyman stated that there were a few hot cinders in the grate, but that there was no smoke from them. After he had been a short time in the chimney he was heard to moan, and the journeyman called to him to come down, but not receiving any answer he became alarmed, and having procured a ladder he took the pot off the chimney, but could neither see nor hear anything of him. He then

got assistance to open the side of the chimney and the lad was taken out; . . . the surgeon being of opinion he died from suffocation, the jury returned a verdict accordingly.'

Everyone will remember how in *Oliver Twist* Fagin has a regular academy for teaching children to steal. This is not fiction, but fact. Samuel Wilderspin, a philanthropic Quaker, writes:

'It is said that in the year 1819 the number of boys in London alone who procured a considerable part of their substance by pocket-picking and thieving in every possible form was estimated at from eleven to fifteen hundred. One man (who lived in Wentworth Street, near Spitalfields) had forty boys in training to steal and pick pockets, who were paid for their exertions with a part of the plunder. Fortunately, however, this notable tutor of thieves was himself convicted of theft and transported. . . .

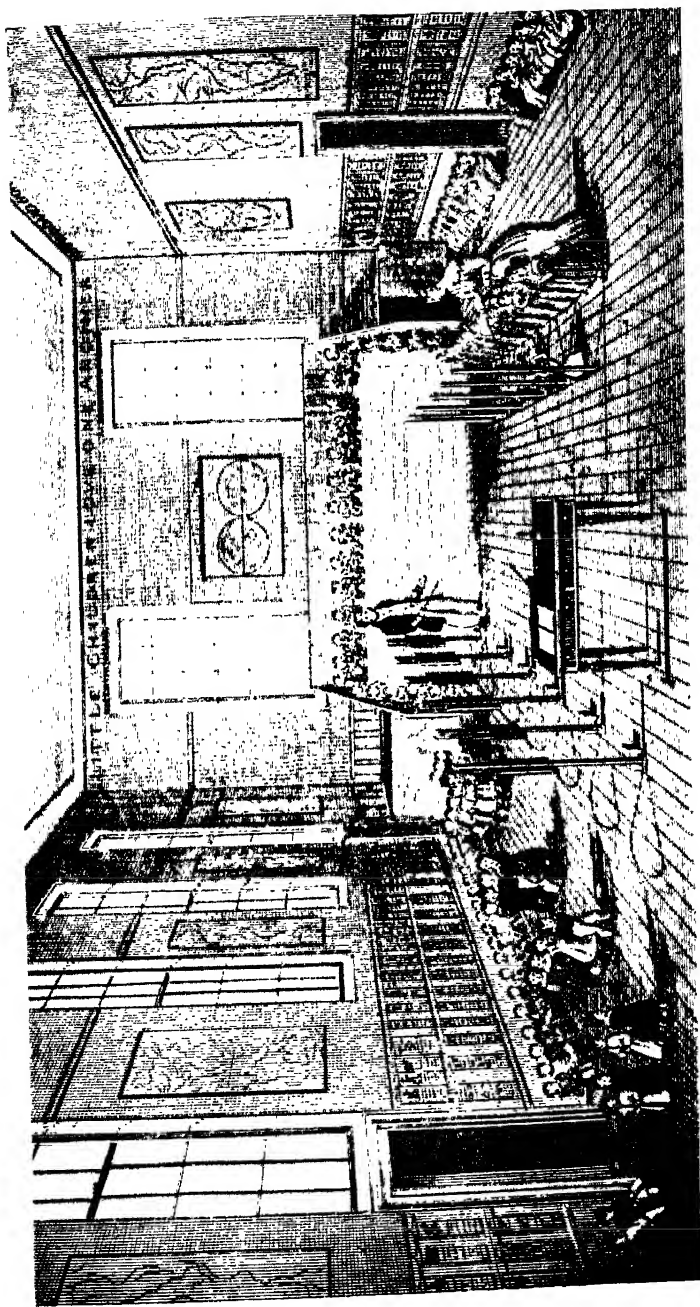
'A female, apparently not more than 19 years of age (named Jane Smith) and a child just turned five years old (Mary R.) were put to the bar before the magistrate charged with circulating counterfeit coin in Westminster and the county of Surrey to a vast extent. The elder had become so notorious that she was necessitated to leave off putting the bad money away herself, and was in the habit of employing children of tender years to pass the counterfeit money. The child's parents, who were hard-working, honest people, their feelings on hearing that their infant had been seduced into the commission of such a crime can be imagined. The woman had formerly lived in the same street, and was frequently giving halfpence and cakes to the child, who would in consequence follow her anywhere. . . .'

CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

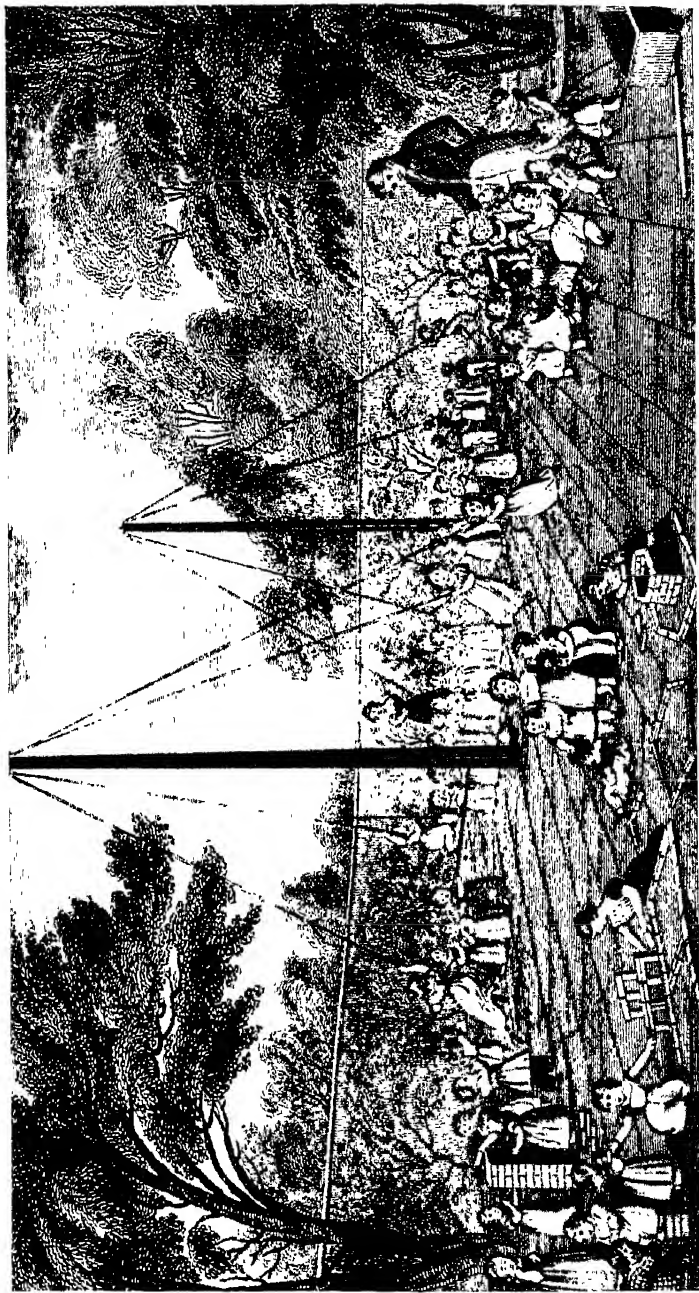
The education of children can only be regarded as a chamber of horrors. If one reckons the public schools as being the best that were provided, the least evil that can be said of them is that their learning was useless, and their mode of life rough.

Of the girls' schools, we have a vivid picture in the Lowood of *Jane Eyre*, which, whether exaggerated or not, shows at least how it impressed a sensitive child. But there existed a special cheap type designed primarily, it would seem, to get rid of boys whom their parents did not want at home. These schools were usually a long way from the metropolis, and in days when Scotland seemed as distant as America now, parents had few opportunities of knowing what went on in them. A great many were situated in Yorkshire, and were known amongst the neighbours as 'London Schools'; their reputation being too bad for them to get many local pupils. These schools obtained pupils by advertising in the London papers, asking such low fees that it should have been clear to any sensible person that children could not be properly cared for at the price. From time to time articles appeared in the daily press, warning parents to make careful enquiry before trusting their children to cheap and distant schools where, owing to the length of the journey, children would probably not return for holidays and would remain, without supervision from friends or relatives, for two or three years together.

What went on in the worst type of these schools has been depicted by Dickens in Dotheboys Hall. In order to



50. Samuel Wilderspin's New Infant School. For Poor Children from 18 Months to 5 Years old
The Class Room



51. Samuel Wilderspin's New Infant School. The Playground

* CHILDREN *

make his picture accurate, he purposely went to Yorkshire with his illustrator, and arranged to have himself introduced by letter to Mr. Shaw, the original of Mr. Squeers, as a parent with children to send. In spite of his precautions, he did not manage to penetrate into the school, Mr. Shaw being too wary to admit visitors. But Dickens gathered sufficient from his interview with Shaw and from the neighbours' accounts to give an accurate picture of these schools.

Proof that his account did not exaggerate is the evidence given in a case when Shaw was prosecuted by the parents of a pupil who had gone blind through ill treatment and neglect. The case was tried in 1823 and the schoolmaster was mulcted of heavy damages; yet some fifteen years later Dickens found this same man still running a school on the old lines and actually getting pupils. Unless we are to assume that the parents of the wretched children were utterly lacking in parental affection, we must suppose that the case was only reported in the local papers.

The trial, Jones versus Shaw, took place at the Court of Common Pleas, London, on October 30th, 1823. This report is from *The Yorkshire Herald*:

'William Jones, one of the boys who had been at defendant's school, was a witness, and he gave such a description of his treatment as, for the honour of humanity, we must hope is exaggerated. He said for the first week they treated him well, and gave him toast for breakfast; then they turned him among the other boys, and gave him hasty pudding. There were nearly 300 boys in the school. They had meat three times a week, and on the other days potatoes and bread and cheese. The boys were frequently four or five days without

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jacket or trousers, while they were mending. The boys washed in a long trough, similar to what the horses drink from; they had only two towels, and the great boys used to take advantage of the little boys, and use the towels first. They had no supper, and had warm water, milk and dry bread for tea. They had hay and straw beds, and one sheet and one quilt to each bed, in which four or five boys slept; there were about 30 beds in one room, and a large tub in the middle. There were only three or four boys in some of the beds. They had quills furnished them to flea the beds every other morning, and caught a good beating if they did not fill them with fleas.

‘They had the skimmings of the pot every Sunday afternoon; it often had maggots; the usher offered a penny for every maggot, and the boys found more than a quart full, but he did not give them the money. They had soap every Saturday, but that was always used by the great boys, and the little ones had no soap but what they bought. On one occasion in October, I felt a weakness in my eyes, and could not write my copy; Mr. Shaw said he would beat me; on the next day I could not see at all, and told Mr. Shaw, who sent me and three others to the wash-house. I staid in the wash-house about a month; the number of boys when I left was eighteen. I was then put into a room; there were nine boys totally blind.

‘The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, £300 damages.

‘The next day a similar case to the last was heard against the same defendant. In June or July 1820 Mr. Ockerby sent three sons to be educated by the defendant Shaw, who was to find in clothing, food, etc. for 20

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guineas per annum. About September two of the three were grievously affected by ophthalmia, and in the January following, Shaw being in town, and Mr. Ockerby enquiring for letters from his sons, was told that they had a trifling disorder in their eyes, occasioned by standing too near the fire.'

Yet there was, at the time, an increasing interest in popular education and the Government, when pressed to do something, behaved as governments often do, by assuring everybody that everything was quite all right. But this was also the age of statistics, and so we find a band of enthusiastic amateur statisticians founding the Manchester Statistical Society, and making a special study of the education provided in Manchester, in order to refute the Government's indolent optimism.

As Dr. Kay Shuttleworth reported (and he was the leading spirit in this venture): 'The overworked population had scarcely any means of education except Sunday schools, dame schools and adventure schools. They were ignorant, harassed with toil, inflamed with drink, and often goaded with want owing to the sudden depressions in the trade.'

The Dame Schools are described in the Report of the Committee of the Statistical Society in 1834 as 'in the most deplorable condition. The greater part of them are kept by females, but some by old men, whose only qualification for this employment seems to be their unfitness for every other. Many of these teachers are engaged at the same time in some other employment, such as shop-keeping, sewing, washing, etc., which renders any regular instruction among their scholars absolutely impossible. Indeed, neither parents nor teachers seem to consider this as the principal object in sending their

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children to these schools, but generally say that they go there in order to be taken care of, and to be out of the way at home.'

'These schools are generally to be found in very dirty, unwholesome rooms—frequently in close, damp cellars, or old, dilapidated garrets. In one of these schools eleven children were found in a small room in which one of the children of the mistress was lying in bed ill of the measles. Another child had died in the same room of the same complaint a few days before, and no less than thirty of the usual scholars were then confined at home with the same disease.

'In another school, all the children, to the number of twenty, were squatted on the bare floor, there being no benches, chairs or furniture of any kind in the room. The master said his terms would not allow him to provide forms; but he hoped that as his school increased and his circumstances thereby improved, he should be able some time or other to provide this luxury.

'In by far the greater number of these schools, there were only two or three books among the whole number of scholars; in others there was not one, and the children depended for their instruction on the chance of some one of them bringing a book, or a part of one, from home. Books, however, were occasionally provided by the mistress, and in this case the supply is somewhat greater; but in almost all cases it is exceedingly deficient.

'One of these schools is kept by a blind man, who hears his scholars read their lessons and explains them with great simplicity; he is, however, liable to interruptions in his academic labours, as his wife keeps a mangle and he is obliged to turn it for her.

'Occasionally, in some of the more respectable dis-

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tricts, there are still to be found one or two of the old primitive Dame Schools, kept by a tidy, elderly female, whose school has an appearance of neatness and order, which strongly distinguishes it from this class of schools. The terms, however, are somewhat higher here, and the children evidently belong to a more respectable class of parents.

‘The terms of the Dame Schools vary from 2d. to 7d. a week, and average 4d. The average yearly receipts of each mistress are about £17 10s. The number of children attending these Dame Schools is 4,722; but it appears to the Committee that no instruction really deserving the name is received in them: and in reckoning the number of those to be considered as partaking of the advantages of useful education, these children must be left almost entirely out of the amount.’

There was another method of education for which its devotees claimed great things. This was teaching children to teach each other. By this means, it was stated, one master could manage to teach a thousand children at once, even more if necessary. All that was required was a sufficiently large airy room, a minimum of apparatus in the form of wooden boards on which lessons were pasted, and slates for the children to write on. The children were divided into little groups of six or seven with one of their number as monitor. The monitors, by dint of repetition, taught a lesson by heart which had been taught them by another monitor, and so on through the whole hierarchy. Curiously enough, this system had been invented by two men, unknown to each other, almost simultaneously. One was Dr. Bell, the other Joseph Lancaster. Add to this that the former belonged to the Established Church and the latter to the Dissenters, and it will easily be

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imagined that between the disciples of the two founders there sprang up a great rivalry as to who was the real originator, and which, of the slight variations in method, was best.

Both founders claimed that, by their method of repeating by rote, children could, if the lesson were suitably arranged, be made to think for themselves. Here is the lesson recommended in one of the Lancastrian Manuals for making children think for themselves about the Scriptures:

‘In connection with the correct reading of the Scriptures, it becomes an object of the highest importance that the pupil should not only understand the meaning of what is read, but be so far interested in its communication as to regard them with reverence, and habitually to apply them to his own conduct and conscience. To accomplish this in the most effectual manner, an easy system of interrogation is pursued at the Society’s Model School.

‘Supposing the following sentence to be read in the lowest or fourth class: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him, while He is near.” The monitor would propose one or more such questions as these:

Q. Who are to seek?

A. All men.

Q. Whom are we to seek?

A. The Lord.

Q. When are we to seek the Lord?

A. While He may be found.

Q. Whom are we to call upon?

A. Him.

Q. While who is near?

A. He.

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Q. Who is meant by He ?

A. The Lord.

Q. What is meant by seek?

A. Enquire after.

Q. How are we to call on the Lord?

A. In Faith.

Q. What name is given to the act of calling on the Lord?

A. Prayer.'

These model questions and answers can be matched by those used by Samuel Wilderspin.

Here are a few letters from his alphabet for infants from *eighteen months* to five years old:

E

Q. What letter is this?

A. E is for egg.

Q. What is the use of an egg?

A. It is useful for many purposes; to put into puddings, and to eat by itself.

Q. Should country children keep an egg if they find it in the hedge?

A. No, it is thieving; they should find out the owner and take it home.

Q. Do children ever throw stones at fowls?

A. Yes, but they are mischievous children, and perhaps do not go to school.

Q. What ought children to learn by going to school?

A. To be kind and good to everybody, and to everything that has life.

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M

Q. What letter is this?

A. The letter M, for Monday, for mouse, etc.

Q. What is the use of the mouse?

A. To make the servants diligent and put the things out of the way.

Q. How can mice make servants diligent?

A. If people don't put the candles in a proper place, the mice will gnaw them.

Q. Are mice of any other service?

A. Please sir, if the mice did not make a smell, some people would never clean their cupboards out.

(This answer was given by a child of four years old; and immediately afterwards, another child called out: 'Please sir, if it were not for bugs, some people would not clean their bedsteads.')



“Coal carriers”



XI. AMUSEMENTS



According to the *Lady's Magazine*, by the end of the year 1837, the theatres, though still rowdy, had been 'cleaned up'.

Covent Garden. On Friday, December 17th, Her Majesty honoured this theatre with her presence. . . . With great judgement, on visiting Drury Lane, the Queen chose an opera by a native composer, and in honour to the tragic talent of Covent Garden, on visiting that house, selected Lord Byron's beautiful tragedy of *Werner*, which it is well known was adapted to the stage by the talented lessee of that establishment, thus conferring the highest compliments on the leading stars of both houses. "God save the Queen" was sung with a degree of power and beauty which perhaps excelled the performance at the other theatre; and "Rule Britannia" made the beautiful chandeliers rattle. . . . No addition was made to the prices of admission. And we cannot but award to Mr. Macready the highest mead of praise for

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the good taste displayed in the public arrangements. Virtuous females may now enter the boxes of this house without fear of being disgusted with the presence of those who disgrace the very name of woman!’

Nevertheless the theatres were still uncomfortable places.

‘Except in Her Majesty’s Theatre’, writes A. L. Hayward, ‘there were no stalls, the pit coming right up to the orchestra and its seats being nothing better than hard wooden benches without backs. The whole floor smelled strongly of oranges and beer, for between acts fruit-girls and pot-boys supplied the audience with those refreshments when required. The curtain was often merely of simple green baize, and, when tragedies were being played, the floor cloth was conventionally of the same material. Most of the houses, such as the Haymarket, were lighted only with candles or lamps, and the much debated practice of lowering lights during the performance of the play had not been introduced.’

Comfortable, or not comfortable, the Haymarket drew enormous audiences to its nautical favourite *Black-eyed Susan*, and produced a great illusion of reality even without the help of that newly introduced assistant, gas.

The *Lady’s Magazine* says:

‘Sheridan Knowles’ sterling comedy of the *Love Chase* still continues to draw all the fashionable and rational members of society within the walls of the Haymarket. T. P. Cooke has been added to the company, and has been acting his favourite characters of the William in *Black-eyed Susan* and Long Tom Coffin in the *Pilot*; in the latter part when attacked by several persons, who appear to be getting the better of him, he was helped by a new ally, a Jack Tar, who, sitting in the pit, and per-

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ceiving Long Tom's odds, sung out in a transport of indignation, "Fair play, you lubbers!" Finding his words unattended to, and impressed by the reality of the mimic combat, at the sight of a shipmate in danger his blood was up, and clearing the orchestra with one bound, he was by Long Tom's side, singing out, "Cheer up mess-mate, I'll lend you a hand to pitch into 'em!" Suiting the action to the word, he was about to let drive at the assailants of his brother Tar; but they, considering "discretion the better part of valour" took to their heels and sought refuge behind the scenes, leaving Cooke and his coadjutant masters of the boards. The audience were convulsed with laughter, and received T. P. Cooke's apology for the unexpected interruption with good grace.'

Black-eyed Susan, which hangs upon a simple-minded story of how true love between William and Susan did not run smoothly because of the wicked Captain Cross-tree's scheming, abounds in melodramatic situations. They have little to do with the plot but afforded grand opportunities for spectacle. Here are some of them:

BLACK-EYED SUSAN

SCENE V

[*The cave of the smugglers. It is supposed to lead to a subterranean passage opening on the sea-shore. Casks on each side of the stage, tables, cans, etc.*]

[*Enter Lieutenant Pike, disguised as a French officer.*]

Pike: The smugglers are caught—we'll roast them in their own trap. The fools! I have gulled them with a story as long as the main top bowline. They think me a French officer, escaped from a prison ship, and have

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stowed me away here until an opportunity shall serve to take me over to France. Eh! Who have we here?

[Retires.]

[Enter Raker.]

Raker: Captain Hatch promises well; it is but a lie—aye, but such a one. No, I'm determined not to join such a plot, yet I'll seem to do so too. Mounseer!

Pike: Who dat?

Raker: A friend.

Pike: Ma foi! dis place is de veritable enfer—dis de diable.

Raker: Yes, you are not used to it; it isn't so pleasant as Paris, I daresay. Well, you have paid us decently for the job, still I don't think it altogether right that having been taken fighting against us, we should aid your escape—the captain says so, however.

[Enter Hatchet, P.S. Smugglers come in from different parts, seat themselves at table and prepare for drinking.]

Hatchet: What's that about the captain?

Raker: Only talking a bit with the mounseer.

Hatchet: Well, Frenchman, about midnight the craft gets under weigh, and tomorrow you may sup in France.

Pike: Avec beaucoup de plaisir, ce sera bien agréable.
[Aside] Are all the gang here, I wonder?

Raker: Hullo, what's that? Why, the Mounseer is speaking English!

Hatchet: English? Not he, poor fellow! He hasn't sense enough like you and me.

[Enter Smuggler, from back of cave.]

Smuggler: A prize! a prize!

All: Where?

Smuggler: At the mouth of the creek. It is the excise-



MR. FRAZER,

Mr. H. Horncastle, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Plumptre
 Mr. Dixon, Mr. Glendon, Mr. Kerridge, Mr. Collett,
 Mr. Adams, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Horton, Mr. Bedford &c.
 Miss Annette Mears, Miss M. A. Crisp, Miss Johnstone
 Miss Merion, Miss Wood, Miss Bedford, &c. &c.

EACH NIGHT AN **OPERA,** A VARIETY OF **MUSICAL PERFORMANCES,** AND **BALLET PANTOMIME**

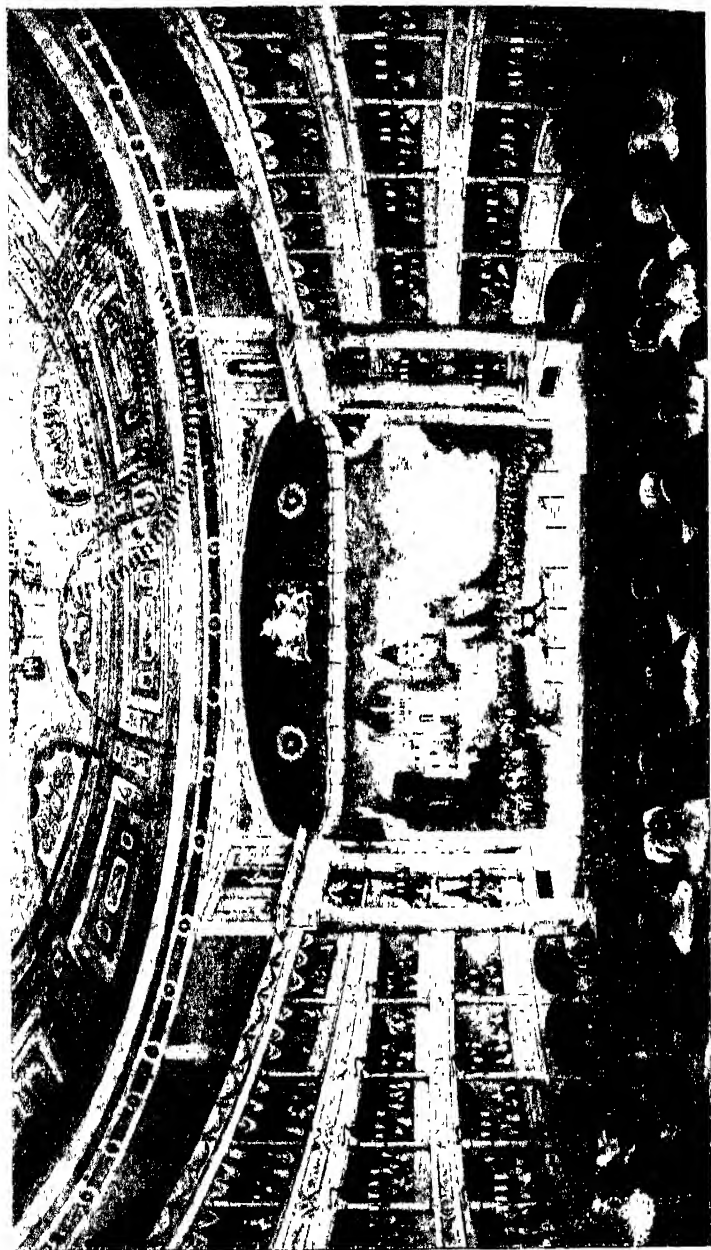
Proprietor, - - - - -

Managing Director, - - - - -

MR. T. ROUSE.

MR. CAMPBELL.

J. W. PEARL, Printer, 21, New Cut, Lambeth, opposite the Victoria Theatre.



55. Drury Lane Theatre, The Wrestling Scene from *As You Like It*

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cutter's boat—her crew are somewhere about. Let us first scuttle the craft, and then—

Pike: Villains!

Hatchet: Ha! treachery! [*To Pike*] You are no Frenchman?

All: Down with him! Down with him!

Pike: Fifty on one—nay then let's make a bout of it—
Skylark's crew, ahoy!

[A huzza is given. Sailors rise up from behind various parts of the scene from the butts, and present their pistols at the smugglers, who, after a brief struggle, yield.]

The Act closes.

ACT II, SCENE III.

[Enter Captain Crosstree, intoxicated, from inn U.E. O.P.]

Crosstree (singing): 'Cease, rude Boreas . . .' Confound that fellow's wine—and mischief on that little rogue's black eyes, for one or the other has made sad havoc here.

Susan (aside): The stranger officer that accosted me!

Crosstree: Well, now for the boat. (*Sees Susan*) May I never see salt water again if this be not the very wench! My dear!—my love! Come here!

Susan: Intoxicated, too! I will avoid him. (*Going.*)

Crosstree (staying her): Stop! Why, what are you fluttering about? Don't you know I've found out your secret?—ha, ha! I'm your husband's captain.

Susan: I am glad of it, sir.

Crosstree: Are you so? Come, that sounds well.

Susan: For I think you will give my husband leave of absence, or if that's impossible, allow me to go on board his ship.

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Crosstree: Go on board? That you shall! You shall go into the captain's gig—you shall live in the captain's cabin.

Susan: Sir!

Crosstree: Would it not be a shame for such a beautiful, black-eyed, tender little angel as yourself to visit between decks? Come, think of it—as for William, he's a fine fellow certainly, but you can forget him.

Susan: Sir, let me go!

Crosstree: Forget him, and live for me—by heavens, I love you and must have you!

Susan: If you are a gentleman—if you are a sailor—you will not insult a defenceless woman.

Crosstree: My dear, I have visited too many seaports not to understand all this. I know I may be wrong, but passion hurries me—the wine fires me—your eyes dart lightning into me, and you shall be . . .

Susan: Let me go! William! William!

Crosstree: Your cries are useless.

Susan: Monster! William! William!

[*William rushes in with a drawn cutlass.*]

William: Susan! And attacked by the buccaneers! Die!

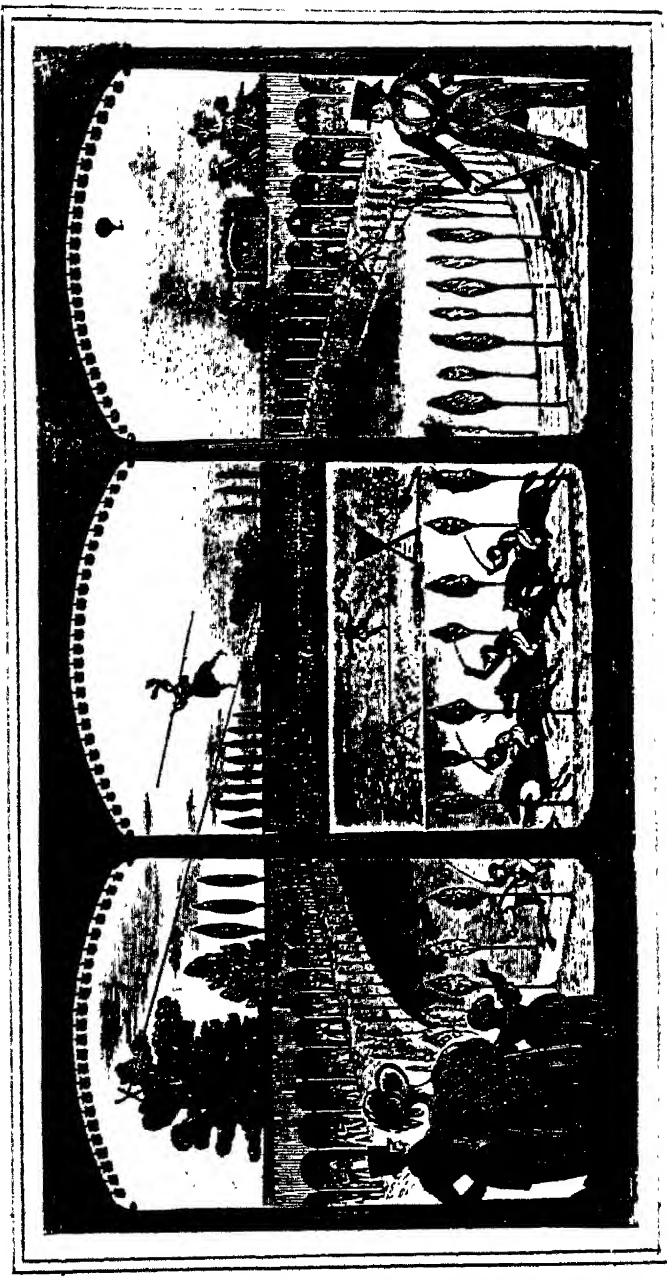
[*William strikes at the captain, whose back is turned towards him—he falls.*]

Crosstree: I deserve my fate.

[*William, and the rest of the sailors, who have re-entered—'The Captain!' William turns away, horror-struck. Susan falls on her knees, the sailors bend over the Captain.*]

END OF ACT II.

[*William is found guilty of striking a superior officer, and condemned to die.*]



54. Rosemary Branch Tea Gardens. Tight Rope Walking and a Pony Race
are in progress



55. Vauxhall Gardens

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ACT III, SCENE V.

[The forecastle of the ship. Procession along the star-board gallery; minute bell tolls. Master-at-arms, with a drawn sword under his arm, point next the prisoner; William follows without his neckcloth and jacket, a Marine on each side; officer of Marines next; Admiral, Captain, Lieutenant and Midshipmen following. William kneels and all aboard appear to join in prayer with him. The procession then marches on, and halts at the gangway; the Marine officer delivers up prisoner to the Master-at-arms and Boatswain, a sailor standing at one of the forecastle guns with the lock-string in his hand. A platform extends from the cat-head to the fore rigging—yellow flag flying at the fore. Colours half-mast down. Music. William embraces the Union Jack—shakes the Admiral's hand.]

William: Bless you! Bless you all! *[Mounts the platform.]*

[Captain Crosstree rushes in P.S.]

Crosstree: Hold! Hold!

Admiral: Captain Crosstree—retire, sir, retire!

Crosstree: Never! If the prisoner be executed, he is a murdered man! I alone am the culprit, 'twas I who would have dishonoured him.

Admiral: This cannot plead here—he struck a superior officer.

Crosstree: No!

Admiral: No?

Crosstree: He saved my life: I had written for his discharge—villainy suppressed the document—'tis here, dated back—when William struck me, he was not the King's sailor—I was not his officer.

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Admiral (having taken the paper): He is free!

[*The seamen give three cheers, William leaps from the platform. Susan is handed on by Cross-tree, followed by Greatbrain, Twig, etc.*]

Black-eyed Susan was only one of a great number of nautical plays, which were immensely popular with audiences to whom Nelson was still a living memory. The nation had been roused to wild enthusiasm by Grace Darling's heroism, and perhaps the least of the annoyances attendant on the publicity forced upon her was that of being put into a play. *Grace Darling, or The Wreck at Sea*, by Edward Stirling, provided a delightful drama about the reunion of parted lovers, and paid not the slightest attention to what really happened. The fact that Grace had been brought up very religiously and cared nothing for young men, could hardly be expected to survive the rush of romantic excitement which her act of heroism aroused. Applications for locks of her hair came until Grace was in danger of growing bald. Her father wrote to the papers complaining that he and his daughter had had to sit for their portraits seven times in twelve days, and the proprietor of Batty's Circus tried to engage her, even going so far as to advertise her appearance on his stage. After this extravagance the play seems quite restrained, and its comic relief only natural.

GRACE DARLING
OR, THE WRECK AT SEA
BY E. STIRLING
ACT I, SCENE V.

Lantern of the lighthouse, with large light burning.

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Darling discovered. Music. Thunder. Storm raging violently. Loud thunder.

Darling: It was on a night like this—never shall I forget it. Oh! what a change was wrought in that night upon my heart—I never since have been the man I was before the fatal occurrence, which, even to this day at times overwhelms me. [*Thunder.*] Hark! the appalling strife of the elements—'tis enough to shake the stoutest heart; yet mine remains firm and unmoved like the solid rocks; and why? I have already passed the sum of misery that such a scene can show.

[*Loud thunder. Grace rushes up.*]

Grace: Father! father! do you hear the awful blast? Never before did Heaven threaten earth with such a storm as this!

Darling: Never! Ha, ha! Yes, once—though it dwells not within your young memory, though so closely interwoven with mine as to form its most essential part!

Grace: Then why have you never told me this?

Darling: Because my thoughts, child, have hitherto been too deep for utterance.

Grace: If you love your daughter, and think her worthy of your confidence, you should let her share your griefs!

Darling: Alas! my child, why should I inflict more than necessary pain—our altered condition brings sufficient griefs. No, no, Grace! you have seldom heard me speak of your mother. Listen, girl—she died when you were but a mere infant—a little, helpless child!

Grace: You've said this before, father.

Darling: Your mother died—but how? [*Thunder and lightning. With emotion.*] 'Twas in such a storm as this—a wild, fearful night.

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Grace: Father!

Darling: Hush! I'll tell you all. When I married your mother, we held a state in life that you have never known, though you inherit from her much that places you above our present. It became needful for her to go a short voyage, the business of which was successfully accomplished, and her return hourly expected. I was continually on the beach, watching the arrival of the vessel. It hove, at last, slowly into sight, just as an equinoctial evening set in with its beautiful calm; but a few, few miles from shore, the ship became wind-bound, when suddenly a storm since equalled [*distant storm*] only by that which now rages about us, rose in overwhelming fury. [*Storm raging.*]

Grace: Gracious Heaven!

Darling: The vessel which bore your mother was dashed by the raging billows against the rocks. In horror and agony I beheld it strike! The beach was lined with boatmen; yet such was the fury of the storm that now none would venture out. I offered all that I was worth; and would have bound myself for life—the slave, the abject slave, of him who'd save her; but in vain. They laughed—called me mad—they spoke the truth, for mad I was. Urged by my despair I rushed into a boat; but the sea, with redoubled fury, warred against my hapless wife, and cast me back on shore. Then, as the streaming lightning played around the fated vessel, I discovered your mother with outstretched arms upon the deck, now looking for relief from man, then imploring mercy from Heaven!

Grace: Merciful Providence!

Darling: Maddened with terror at the sight, I dashed into the waves and vainly strove to swim. Again they

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cast me to the shore. Another awful flash revealed the ship lifted by a dreadful sea on high—then in an instant hurled upon the breakers—it fell, shattered into a thousand pieces, and every soul on board was lost!

Grace: Horrible!

Darling: Reason for a time deserted me. During my illness, by plunder and expenses my possessions dwindled. The events of that dreadful night roused the authorities to erect this lighthouse. I applied for and obtained the situation of keeper, and have ever since experienced a melancholy gratification in my employment. Often from this tower do I gaze for hours upon the spot where your mother was engulfed. [*Gun.*]

Grace: Ah! A signal of distress! Look, father! whence does it proceed?

Darling [*looking out*]: From a vessel on the spot where your mother perished.

Grace: Then, by her dear and cherished memory, we must exert ourselves to save the hapless crew!

Darling: Exert! Did I not exert myself to save her; and how did it avail? Who aided me in the attempt?—none! I'll tend my beacon, and then my duty's done.

Grace: Duty is a cold word. Think on the reputation such a deed would throw upon you, father.

Darling: Reputation! 'Tis but a false glare, which distorts the deeds of fools and rogues; for what is there that may not be done under its deceitful colourings? Without it, virtue may go begging—with it, vice sits down with emperors! What is the difference between a highwayman and the usurer who devours your estates, and the titled gamester who beggars you with a painted card?—merely reputation! Search the world throughout, from

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the palace to the hovel, you will find reputation everything—virtue, nothing.

Voices without: A wreck! A wreck!

Grace: Father, do you hear? Let us leave the lighthouse and hasten out to save the distressed!

[*Storm, thunder, etc., raging fiercely.*]

Darling: Are you mad, girl? You forget the danger you would have. No, no, girl; I stir not hence tonight!

Grace: Not when there are lives to be saved! I *had* a mother who perished on such a night as this. Think, father, that I have still a brother now upon the seas—perhaps those signals of distress come from *him*—I beseech you—aid! Can we pause? No! [*Storm.*]

Darling: The storm rages fiercer than ever.

Grace: Then more than ever is our aid required. Come, father, come, let us to the beach, unmoor and launch the lifeboat, and rescue the drowning, or perish with them! Do not refuse my pleadings—by the name of *her* you loved so well—I implore you! [*He turns from her.*] Then, father, I go alone!

[*A tremendous crash—the glass of the lighthouse is broken, and the real water dashes in; and during the flashes the Forfarshire is seen struggling with the waves. Thunder—loud cries for aid—signal guns—music—Picture.*]

[Mixed up with this are the love-affairs of a servant-girl, Dolly Daisy, with Sandy Doubleknock (a postman) and with Daffodil Primrose (a dandy valet).]

Primrose: Are you alone?

Dolly: No; I'm by myself.

Primrose: Then may I come in? [*Takes her hand.*] The weather is rather over—cast this evening, most unsal—

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orberous. I trust that you don't feel any unpleasant effects from it, dear.

Dolly: No; only when it rains one's apt to get wet.

Primrose: Just so. What I was about to say in reference to the weather is, that it prevented this *bucket* being quite as good as I could have wished. [*Produces nosegay with vulgar thorny flowers.*] Will you accept it?

Dolly: Really, Mr. P., you're too kind. [*Smelling it.*] What beautiful perfumery—I never beheld such *higher sinks*.

Primrose: The *convulsions* is rather fine; but not good enough for you, Miss Daisy.

Dolly: Oh, Mr. Primrose, you men are always saying such fine *deloosive* things!

Primrose: And sometimes true ones, love. How 'ave I suffered since I've been absent. I'd positively rather dine two days upon cold meat than *indoor* such another hour!

Dolly: Well, what *am* I to do about myself?

Primrose: Nothing. Let me do it for you—make you Mrs. Primrose!

Dolly: But what's to become of Mr. Doubleknock! He'll be opening a money-letter by mistake, and get himself transported!

Primrose: He's beneath your notice. Will you be mine? Consent to be made a lady of. . .

Dolly: But how is it to be done? I'm only a lady's maid, living with single gentlemen!

Primrose: By marrying, and becoming Mrs. P. What with my little odds and your little ends, we shall do very well. I've managed to pick up a few crumbs. You shall have all you want.

Dolly: Lor, shall I though? Then I shall want a good

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deal, I promise you. I should wear feathers and lots of flowers and red ribbons, coral beads, white cotton gloves, short double-frilled petticoats, Adelaide boots, and a Victoria pink blue bonnet!

Primrose: Trifles—*nood—i—ties!*

Dolly: I haven't half done yet. I should want to go to all the plays, concerts, dances, the Tower of London, St. Paul's, National Gallery, Italian Opera, *Zoo-gol-i-cal* Gardens, and everywhere else.

Primrose: You shall go everywhere, my dear; and to as many other places as you like to name.

Dolly: Then I must have my bed warmed every night, and a fire in the room when it's very cold, be called as often as I please in the mornings, and always have hot muffins and crumpets, buttered on both sides, for breakfast!

Primrose: You shall, you shall; only say the word. [*Embracing her.*] Oh, Dolly! Dolly!

Here is a cutting from the papers about the Adelphi performance:

'Grace Darling, you dear, good-natured, benevolent, magnanimous, heroic—but we must stop, or we shall exhaust the whole catalogue of adjectives—kind-hearted creature, we *would* have said, gratifying must be the manner in which your late conduct has been so deservingly rewarded. Acts like those under consideration are not everyday occurrences, however well they may eke out the pages of one of Colburne's three-volume novels; so when they do occur, it is but fitting they should be made the most of. Grace Darling, of whom songs have been written and composed, whose name in conjunction with her gallant father and the Fern lighthouse is as

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“familiar to our mouths as household words”, is then the subject of the burletta at the Adelphi, and the author has certainly done all in his power with the incidents afforded him. The acting of Lyon, J. Webster, Wilkinson, and Mrs. Yates, was particularly effective, nor must we forget to notice Mrs. Keeley, who, as *Dolly Daisy*, moved the audience alternately to tears and laughter. But the scenery and machinery, which were on a very extensive scale, were, after all, the principal attractions, and elicited much applause, whilst the piece itself was announced for nightly repetition amidst much applause.’

The audience which attended these patriotic and filibustering plays would also go of an evening to the Grecian Saloon, which stood in the grounds of the Eagle Tavern (of ‘Pop goes the weasel’ fame) in the City Road, and was a great place for light recreation. Boz has given us an account of its patrons and entertainments.

“‘I was a thinking,” said Mr. Samuel Wilkins, during a pause in the conversation—“I was a thinking of taking J’mima to the Eagle tonight.”—“O my!” exclaimed Mrs. Ivins. “Lor, how nice!” said the youngest Miss Ivins. “Well, I declare!” added the youngest Miss Ivins but one. “Tell J’mima to put on her white muslin, Tilly,” screamed Mrs. Ivins, with motherly anxiety; and down came J’mima herself soon afterwards in a white muslin gown carefully hooked and eyed, a little red shawl, plentifully pinned, a white straw bonnet trimmed with red ribbons, a small necklace, a large pair of bracelets, Denmark satin shoes, and open-worked stockings; white cotton gloves on her fingers, and a cambric pocket-handkerchief, carefully folded up, in her hand—all quite genteel and ladylike. And away went Miss J’mima Ivins and

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Mr. Samuel Wilkins, and a dress-cane, with a gilt knob at the top, to the admiration and envy of the street in general. . . . They had no sooner turned into the Pancras road than who should Miss J'mima Ivins stumble upon, by the most fortunate accident in the world, but a young lady as she knew, with *her* young man!—And it is so strange how things do turn out sometimes—they were actually going to the Eagle too. . . . So Mr. Samuel Wilkins was introduced to Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man, and they all walked on together, laughing and talking and joking away like anything; and when they got as far as Pentonville Miss Ivins's friend's young man *would* have the ladies go into the Crown, to taste some shrub, which, after a great blushing and giggling, and hiding of faces in elaborate pocket-handkerchiefs, they consented to do. Having tasted it once, they were easily prevailed upon to taste it again; and they sat out in the garden tasting shrub, and looking at the Busses alternately, till it was just the proper time to go to the Eagle; and then they resumed their journey, and walked very fast, for fear they should lose the beginning of the concert in the Rotunda.

“How 'ev'nly!” said Miss J'mima Ivins and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend, both at once, when they had passed the gate and were fairly inside the gardens. There were the walks, beautifully gravelled and planted—and the refreshment-boxes, painted and ornamented like so many snuff-boxes—and the variegated lamps shedding their rich light upon the company's heads—and the place for dancing ready chalked for the company's feet—and a Moorish band playing at one end of the gardens—and an opposition military band playing away at the other. Then, the waiters were rushing to and fro with glasses

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of negus, and glasses of brandy-and-water, and bottles of ale, and bottles of stout; and ginger-beer was going off in one place, and practical jokes were going on in another; and people were crowding to the door of the Rotunda; and in short the whole scene was, as Miss J'mima Ivins, inspired by the novelty, or the shrub, or both, observed—"one of dazzling excitement". As to the concert-room, never was anything half so splendid. There was an orchestra for the singers, all paint, gilding and plate-glass; and such an organ! Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man whispered it had cost "four hundred pound", which Mr. Samuel Wilkins said was "not dear neither"; an opinion in which the ladies perfectly coincided. The audience were seated on elevated benches round the room, and crowded into every part of it; and everybody was eating and drinking as comfortably as possible. Just before the concert commenced, Mr. Samuel Wilkins ordered two glasses of rum-and-water "warm with—" and two slices of lemon, for himself and the other young man, together with "a pint of sherry wine for the ladies and some sweet caraway-seed biscuits." ...'

A great draw at the Eagle and other London pleasure gardens such as Vauxhall and Cremorne, were the spectacles. In pantomime, after Grimaldi's retirement, spectacle and scenery encroached more and more on clowning, though the Harlequinade was as popular as ever. Mr. A. L. Hayward, the Dickens authority, gives this contemporary description:

"The comic business then commences, with a country public house, in which the indestructibility of Harlequin is famously shown. He is crammed down a pump, pumped out in a pail, rolled flat, fired out of a cannon,

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decapitated, has his head thrown into the pit, and otherwise marvellously ill-treated, but always comes up entire again. Next we have a lively view of Boulogne, on the quay, with the hotel "touters", douaniers and visitors. The Clown here makes a great business of examining the travellers. Punch is well received, but put back upon the discovery that he has a caricature of Louis Philippe in his portfolio, and finally a luckless traveller is pulled to pieces by the hotel people. Then the Egyptian Hall turns out its curiosities in a general polka: after this a bedroom scene is introduced for the Clown and Pantaloon, whose beds turn into two fishing boats, and the room into the open sea. A fishmonger's shop and a music publisher's afford room for some of the Clown's oyster-eating and pilfering, and some hits at the Jenny Lind mania. After this, the ascent of the Vauxhall balloon brings all the characters to the abode of the stars and the curtain falls upon a tableau of revolving coloured fires.'

Joey Grimaldi died in 1837, having crippled himself with leaps and tumbles so dangerous that he always had to have an understudy in the wings waiting to take on when he had knocked himself out. His genius dwarfed all his successors. In one of his famous songs, *An Oyster Crossed in Love*, Joey sat between a codfish and a huge oyster that opened and closed its shell in time to the music, and he is said to have moved half the audience to tears.

His farewell performance took place in 1829, some eight years before he died, and Boz has given us a description of it:

' . . . the pit and gallery were completely filled in less than half an hour after opening the doors, the boxes

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were very good from the first, and at half-price were as crowded as the other parts of the house. In the last piece Grimaldi acted one scene, but being wholly unable to stand, went through it seated on a chair. Even in this distressing condition he retained enough of his old humour to succeed in calling down repeated shouts of merriment and laughter. . . . As soon as silence could be obtained, and he could summon up sufficient courage to speak, he advanced to the footlights and delivered, as well as his emotions would permit, the following Farewell Address:

“Ladies and gentlemen—in putting off the clown’s garment, allow me to drop also the clown’s taciturnity, and address you in a few parting sentences. I entered early on this course of life, and leave it prematurely. Forty-eight years only have passed over my head—but I am going as fast down the hill of life as that older Joe—John Anderson. Like vaulting ambition, I have overleaped myself, and pay the penalty in an advanced old age. If I have now any aptitude for tumbling, it is through bodily infirmity, for I am worse on my feet than I used to be on my head. It is four years since I jumped my last jump—filched my last oyster—boiled my last sausage—and set in for retirement. Not quite so well provided for, I must acknowledge, as in the days of my clownship, for then, I dare say some of you remember, I used to have a fowl in one pocket and sauce for it in another. . . .”

‘It was with no trifling difficulty that Grimaldi reached the conclusion of this little speech, although the audience cheered loudly, and gave him every possible expression of encouragement and sympathy. When he had finished, he still stood in the same place, bewildered

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and motionless, his feelings being so greatly excited that the little power illness had left him wholly deserted him.'

The other side of the river drew crowds to Astley's Amphitheatre.

*Over the water, and over the way,
Over the water to Astley's;
Come, get in the coach, and be off to the play,
For there is no sport like at Astley's.
See the battle of Waterloo, Moscow in flames,
As natural as you could desire,
It looks so very hot, you'd rather be shot
Than roasted alive in their fire.*

The great circus ring with tiers and boxes all around, was the scene of equestrian displays; indeed at Astley's *Macbeth* was turned into an equestrian tragedy. Andrew Ducrow was one of the ring's most successful managers for, 'in addition to his skill as a horseman he was an excellent actor of pantomime, though he had the utmost contempt for everything in the shape of dialogue. "Cut the cackle and come to the 'osses" was an adage that acquired immortality. To everyone's relief the "cackle" was cut, and all eyes were opened in breathless wonder as Ducrow dashed round the arena on six horses or fought terrific fights in defence of Virtue and Beauty—also on horseback.'

Astley's was notorious for its advertising tricks, which were most ingenious. The clown Barry sailed down the Thames from Vauxhall Bridge to Westminster Bridge in a washing-tub drawn by four geese. Both he and Lister of the Old Vic drove down to the theatre in a barrow drawn by a geese-harnessed tandem, and Boswell drove eight cats.

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Leaving the Surrey side of the river and coming up along Baker Street, where old Madam Tussaud was to be seen sitting at the door of her Waxworks taking the entrance money herself, one could be edified by the panoramas in Regent's Park. (Morality permeated most forms of amusement; even fleas were harnessed to virtue. We read in an old Exeter diary: 'Sir William [Paterson] went to see a curious exhibition of Industrious Fleas. I allowed both servants to go together early to the same exhibition, all thought the performance very curious and ingenious.')

Regent's Park, begun in 1812, was not completed till 1838. Its great attractions resided in two buildings, which displayed Panoramas. One of them, the Coliseum, stood within the Park to the south of the lake, looking rather like the present Albert Hall. In 1829 it had shown a panorama of London painted by Mr. Hornor from a crow's nest specially built for him on the summit of the Cross of St. Paul's. London went mad about it. The panorama could be viewed from various balcony-like stages which were reached either by a spiral staircase or inside its shaft which contained an Ascending Room that held ten or twelve persons. The other building, which still stands on the east side of Park Square, but for many years has been used as a place of worship, was the Diorama. Its pictures, painted by Bouton and Daguerre, 'were changed two or three times every year; they were suspended in separate rooms, and a circular room containing the spectators was turned round "much like an eye in its socket" to admit the view of each alternately. The pictures were 80 ft. in length and 40 ft. in height, painted in solid and in transparency.'

The thrill which these homes of panorama (and a

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third, the Alhambra in Leicester Square) provided cannot be over-estimated. They were the rage and comparable to our cinemas. In the course of the many years during which panoramas held their sway, the Coliseum added to itself grottos, a Gothic aviary, and a Temple of Theseus, while the Diorama went one better by providing a glyptotheké, two large glass conservatories, a Swiss chalet (with mountain scenery and real water), and a zoo from Central Africa.

Although panorama and its adjuncts were considered to be High Art, its spirit was essentially the same as that which invested the peep-shows with their glamour. 'Lord' George Sanger has described his first successes with a peep-show on the occasion of William IV's death:

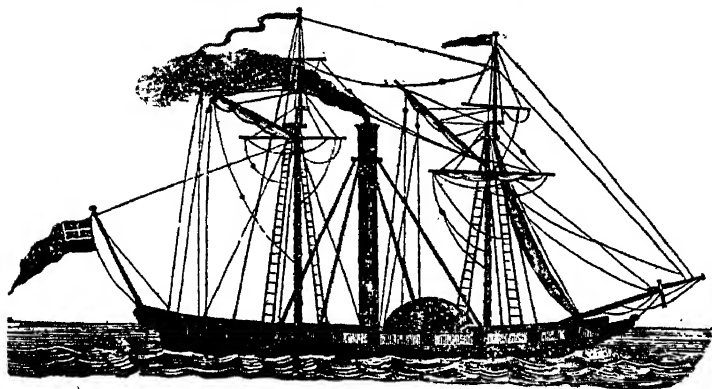
'I pattered about the death-bed, lying-in-state and funeral procession of the late King to such effect that the money came rolling in. My patter, in fact—and I say it in all humility—seemed quite as big a draw as the pictures themselves. Many a time the gentlemen staying in the hotel would pay for people to see the show, so that they might hear young George rattle off the same old tale.

'That, however, is by the way, for our pictures were really excellent of their kind, and I must mention their origin if only in justice to the memory of a humble but remarkable genius. This genius was an Irish artist named Jack Kelly, who lived in Leather Lane, High Holborn. His charges were not great. An ordinary peep-show picture, about four feet by two and a half feet, of some notorious crime, with plenty of colour in it, cost three-and-sixpence. A battle piece, with hundreds of figures in it, cost seven-and-six! And there was plenty of



56. Two Spangled Theatrical Prints
Above Part of a Harlequinade with Grimaldi
Below a Columbine

For LIVERPOOL.



The Public's favourite Steam Packet
“Mountaineer.”



37. A Steamboat Bill
Nothing with a Deal. 1837

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life in his compositions as well as colour, I can tell you, so that their effect behind the glasses was all that could be wished.

‘Our pictures of King William’s death and funeral cost us the price of battle-pieces. “Sure,” said Kelly to my father, “it isn’t every day that Kings die. It would be a scandalous thing if a Monarch’s death-bed didn’t equal in cost the killin’ of a lot of ignorant sojers! Seven-an’-six each is the price, Mr. Sanger, and divvle a penny less! Moreover, as ye are an ould customer, I’ll give ye my word to kape sober till I’ve finished the lot!’

‘That promise did it. The pictures became ours at seven-and-sixpence each, and a grand bargain they proved.’



XII. READING AND WRITING



Round about 1837, the English reading public was attacked by Bozomania. This is how G. A. Sala remembered the phenomenon:

‘Charles Dickens’ unsurpassed works of fiction are, I hope and believe, as widely read in these days as they were in 1837–8; but the present generation, I should say, can scarcely form an idea of the absolute *furor* of excitement which reigned in reading England during the time that the monthly parts of the novels in the green covers were in progress of publication. There is an anecdote, related many years since by a reviewer in *Blackwood’s*, setting forth how, when he . . . was a school-boy, there suddenly occurred to him one Sunday in church in the middle of a very dull sermon, the memory of an exceptionally comic episode in *Pickwick* that impelled him to burst out in a prolonged and uncontrollable burst of laughter; which act of irreverent hilarity led to his being at once, and ignominiously, removed by the

beadle—there were beadles in those days—from the sacred edifice.

‘Stories of this kind were as plentiful as blackberries in the early days of what people used to call the “Bozomania”. Dogs and cats used to be named “Sam” and “Jingle” and “Mrs. Bardell” and “Job Trotter”. A penny cigar, presumably of British make, was christened “The Pickwick”. Gutter-blooded publishers pirated the masterpieces of farcical fiction which was astonishing the English-speaking world, and we had the “Penny Pickwick” and the “Posthumous Memoirs of the Pic-Nic Club” in weekly numbers. Even the more respectable class of cheap periodicals, *Olios*, *Parterres*, *Mirrors* and the like, were not ashamed to print extracts, sometimes three or four pages at a time, from each monthly part published by Messrs. Chapman & Hall.

‘As for ourselves . . . we used to “play at” Dickens, and dramatise his novels on our own private account. Many a time have I enacted Bill Sikes and murdered Nancy—otherwise my sister—in the back bedroom. . . .

‘We did more than that. We used to buy twopenny Dutch dolls at a toyshop in a queer little alley, called, I think, Crown Court, which ran from King Street into Pall Mall, which puppets my sister used to dress up to represent Mr. Pickwick, the Rev. Mr. Stiggins, the elder Mr. Weller, Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz, and so on. . . . Does old Crown Court still hold its own? Does it yet harbour sweet-stuff shops, where they used to vend the beloved hard-bake, the succulent almond rock, the delightful allycampani, the fascinating Bonaparte’s-ribs, the exhilarating brandy-balls—sweetmeats, I fear, which would be considered coarse in this refined age of chocolate creams and candied violets? There was a tin-

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smith's, too, in the old Crown Court, and I used to please myself with imagining that the original "Little Dustpan" had been manufactured there. I feel tolerably certain that the court comprised a rag-shop, with an effigy of "Aunt Sally" over the door; and my olfactory memory still reminds me that the whole peace smelt desperately of tallow dips, soft soap and kitchen stuff.

' . . . Tired of playing at Dickens, we also played at Greenacres; and I must unreservedly accept the responsibility of having constructed in cardboard a neat model of the "Debtor's Door", Newgate, with the gallows and a practically working drop; while, suspended from the crossbeam, was one of our twopenny dolls from Crown Court, dressed as we imagined Mr. James Greenacre would be attired on the morning of being hanged.'

To be an author, especially a poet, was very fashionable. This accounts to some extent for those typical literary products the Annuals. *The Forget-me-not*, *The Keepsake*, *The Book of Beauty*, *The Book of Gems*, *The Album Wreath*, their very names evoke their period. Here is a description of the Annuals from *Pendennis*:

'That eminent publisher, Mr. Bacon (formerly Bacon and Bungay) of Paternoster Row, besides being the proprietor of the *Legal Review*, in which Mr. Warrington wrote, and of other periodicals of note and gravity, used to present to the world every year a beautiful gift volume called the *Spring Annual*, edited by the Lady Violet Lebas, and numbering amongst its contributors not only the most eminent but the most fashionable poets of our time. Young Lord Dodo's poems first appeared in this miscellany. The Honourable Percy Popjoy, whose chivalrous ballads have obtained him such a

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reputation; Bedwin Sands's Eastern Ghazuls; and many more of the works of our young nobles were first given to the world in the *Spring Annual*, which has since shared the fate of other vernal blossoms, and perished out of the world. The book was daintily illustrated with pictures of reigning beauties, or other prints of a tender and voluptuous character; and as these plates were prepared long beforehand, requiring much time in engraving, it was the eminent poets who had to write to the plates, and not the painters who illustrated the poems.'

Annuals were usually edited by ladies, either aristocratic like Lady E. Stuart Wortley and Lady Blessington, or distinguished like Laetitia E. Landon. The fame of this young lady's poetry went far beyond the Annual public, and she was acclaimed on all sides as the poetess of the age. This seems so surprising on reading her poetry that we can only assume that she caught exactly the spirit of the time. Here are a few verses from the most celebrated works of "L. E. L.", *Erinna*, *The Improvatrice*, *The Troubadour* and *The Golden Violet*.

A Poetess (herself)

*My song has been the mournful history
Of woman's tenderness and woman's tears.
I have but touched the spirit's gentlest chords,
Surely the fittest for my maiden hand.*

‘Erinna’

A hero

*He was young
The castle's lord, but pale like age,
His brow as sculpture beautiful,
But wan as grief's corroded page.*

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*He had no words, he had no smiles,
No hopes, his sole employ to brood
Silently over his sick heart
In sorrow and in solitude.*

A heroine

*They said she was not of mortal birth,
And her face was fairer than face of earth.
What is the thing to liken it to?
Parian marble, snow's first fall?
Her brow was fairer than each and all,
And so delicate was each vein's soft blue
'Twas not like blood that wandered through.
Rarely upon that cheek was shed,
By youth or by health, one tinge of red.*

Another

*The maiden grew beside the tomb.
Perhaps 'twas that that touched her bloom
With somewhat more of mournful shade
Than seems for life's first budding made.*

Annuals were not confined to poetry and fiction only. A very popular series were the *Landscape Annuals*, which explained to tourists under the correct headings of sublime, beautiful and picturesque, what they ought to admire and why.

This is how we ought to admire the Isle of Wight:

Scenery (of the North and South or Back of the Island)

'On the one side, all is busy, dressed, and cheerful, while calmness and security characterise the usual state

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of the river; but on the other, which is exposed to the impetuous tides of the ocean, the scenery participates equally of the beautiful and romantic, the sublime and terrific.

'We shall find the peace of the country replete with the most animating rural charms . . . everywhere displaying the triumph of cultivation. The whole island is chequered by the most lovely opposition . . . the smooth pasturing down, the wild heath, the polished lawn, luxuriant meadows and extensive cornfields, delightfully intermixed with hedge-rows, trees, groves and forest trees . . . the more embellished scenes of elegant seats and genteel cottage-residences out of number.

The Inhabitants

'The constant intercourse which the inhabitants have with persons from all parts of the kingdom has entirely erased any insular peculiarity that might have formerly existed. The yeomanry are a very respectable class: and the native females have the reputation of possessing superior personal charms, and certainly are no less remarkable for those solid and amiable qualities which form the basis of domestic happiness.

What to do when you go to Cowes

'The stranger at Cowes should first enquire for the Parade, and then proceed along the sea-shore westward of the Castle, near which are the bathing-machines. He will presently pass the marine villas of Earl Belfast and Lord Grantham, when he will turn his attention towards several uncommonly tasty lodging-houses, screened by low woods. Here stands the new Episcopalian chapel: it is the most pleasant feature which the town can boast. . . .

Taste in Building

‘Many a time have we lingered with much pleasure in viewing the very picturesque cottages of this delightful village; for besides their neatness and cheerful air of comfort, most of them are so very romantically seated among the rocks and groves as to resemble more the warm nestlings of birds; and require almost as much looking for to be discovered. Each is surrounded by its well-stocked fruit and vegetable garden—roses, myrtle and other fragrant plants, thickly weave around the doors and windows—and ivy or virginia creepers mantle their thatched roofs. . . .

‘The most common error in building, as regards the harmony of the scene, originates in the vanity of preserving “respectability” by an ostentatious exhibition of property and station.

‘The most generally suitable type of medium-sized house is the Swiss cottage, and next the plain thatched cottage of England. . . .

‘Both Norris and East Cowes Castle have lost all the rawness of recent masonry, and acquired rather an air of antiquity so essential to the picturesque dignity of castellated structures, from the rapid growth of ivy and other creepers.’

Equally typical of the period are the ‘society novels’. For those within the magic circle there was the fun of spotting one’s friends through a thin disguise and seeing their idiosyncrasies taken off, as the author was usually anonymous and so had considerable scope. For outsiders there was the same sort of thrill that the gossip column

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public gets nowadays, seeing the *vie intime* of unattainable circles, and sometimes being deliciously shocked at it. As the author himself was not always quite one of the circle he drew, his picture would heighten the glamour in a most gratifying way. 'My son, sir,' the elder Disraeli proudly remarked, 'has never, I believe, even seen a Duke.' Who can forget the picture of the Young Duke playing cards all day and all night and all next day till he was knee deep in cards?

Sometimes, of course, the author knew the characters he portrayed intimately, and then the publishers, knowing the value of the personal touch, would urge him to include as many recognisable characters as possible. Lady Clarinda in *Crochet Castle* explains how she was asked to write a novel.

'*Captain Fitzchrome*: But I must say, though I know you had always a turn for sketching characters, you surprise me by your observation, and especially by your attention to opinions.

'*Lady Clarinda*: Well, I will tell you a secret: I am writing a novel.

'*Captain Fitzchrome*: A novel!

'*Lady Clarinda*: Yes, a novel. And I shall get a little finery by it: trinkets and fal-lals, which I cannot get from papa. You must know I have been reading several fashionable novels, the fashionable this, and the fashionable that; and I thought to myself, why I can do better than any of these myself. So I wrote a chapter or two, and sent them as a specimen to Mr. Puffall, the bookseller, telling him they were to be a part of the fashionable something or other, and he offered me I will not say how much, to finish it in three volumes, and let him pay all the newspapers for recommending it as the work of a

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lady of quality, who had made very free with the characters of her acquaintance.

'Captain Fitzchrome: Surely you have not done so?

'Lady Clarinda: Oh, no; I leave that to Mr. Eavesdrop. But Mr. Puffall made it a condition that I should let him say so.

'Captain Fitzchrome: A strange recommendation.

'Lady Clarinda: Oh, nothing else will do. And it seems you may give yourself any character you like, and the newspapers will print it as if it came from themselves. I have commended you to three of our friends here, as an economist, a transcendentalist, and a classical scholar; and if you wish to be renowned through the world for these, or any other accomplishments, the newspapers will confirm you in their possession for half-a-guinea a piece.

'Captain Fitzchrome: Truly, the praise of such gentry must be a feather in anyone's cap.

'Lady Clarinda: So you will see, some morning, that my novel is "the most popular production of the day". This is Mr. Puffal's favourite phrase. He makes the newspapers say it of everything he publishes. But "the day", you know, is a very convenient phrase; it allows of three hundred and sixty-five "most popular productions" in a year. And in leap-year one more.'

The demand for society scandal led to the existence of that social pest the society journalist. Mr. Eavesdrop is also at Crotchet Castle and Lady Clarinda catalogues him as 'a man who, by dint of a something like smartness, has got into good society. He is a sort of bookseller's tool, and coins all his acquaintance in reminiscences and sketches of character. I am very shy of him for fear he should print me.' He has printed the Reverend Dr.

Folliott, his fellow guest, even to his 'nose and wig'. 'You have dished me up like a savoury omelette, to gratify the appetite of the reading rabble for gossip. The next time, sir, I will respond with the *argumentum baculinum*. Print that, sir: put it on record as a promise of the Reverend Dr. F., which shall be most faithfully kept, with an exemplary bamboo.'

The Doctor's argument was often used, but had little effect, so lucrative was the profession. There was even a special type of gutter press which existed mainly on the scandals the editor could unearth about famous people. Such papers were the *Age*, run by the notorious Charles Malloy Westmacott, who existed largely on blackmail, and *The Satirist*, which at this time had just accused the young Lord de Ros of cheating at cards at Graham's, giving full names and particulars. Malloy Westmacott's portrait was drawn by Bulwer in *England and the English*, and is, no doubt, accurate enough:

'Sneak keeps a Sunday newspaper as a reservoir for the filth of the week. . . . Is a lie to be told of any man? Sneak tells it. Is a Countess to be slandered? Sneak slanders her. Is theft to be committed? Sneak writes to you—

"Sir, I have received some anecdotes about you, which I would not publish for the world if you will give me ten pounds for them." Sneak would declare his own mother a drab, and his father a hangman, for sixpence-halfpenny. Sneak sets up for a sort of Beau Sneak—crawls behind the scenes, and chats with the candle-snuffer; when he gets drunk, Sneak forgets himself and speaks to a gentleman; the gentleman knocks him down. No man has been so often kicked as Sneak—no man so often horsewhipped; his whole carcass is branded with

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the contumely of castigation—methinks there is, nevertheless, another chastisement in reserve for him at the first convenient opportunity. It is a pity to beat one so often beaten—to break bones that have been so often broken; but why deny oneself a luxury at so trifling an expense?—it will be some honour to beat him worse than he has been beaten yet!’

Lady Clarinda’s description of the puffing publisher is not overdrawn. Books were well reviewed when the publisher had a share in the paper, whilst the opposite policy of crying down other men’s wares was vigorously pursued. Politics also played their part; a Radical author writing on whatever subject was sure to be abused in *Blackwood’s* and the *Quarterly*, and vice versa. *The Athenæum* ploughed a lonely furrow in reviewing books entirely on their merits.

The heights to which a hostile reviewer could rise are shown by these extracts from a review in *Fraser’s* of a novel called *Berkeley Castle* by a fashionable young man about town, Grantley Berkeley. This particular piece of vituperation led the author to assault the publisher and the reviewer (Dr. Maginn) to fight a duel with the author, which set all Fleet Street laughing.

Here are some extracts from the review:

‘Here is *Berkeley Castle* lying on the table before us. In the first place, what awfully bad taste it is in Mr. Grantley Berkeley to write a book with such a title. . . . He should have been among the last people in the world to call public attention to the history of his house. . . . We are far from being desirous to insult, as the paltry author of this book does, the character of woman; but when matters are recorded in solemn judgments, there can be no indelicacy in stating that Mr. Grantley Berkeley’s

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mother lived with Mr. Grantley Berkeley's father as his mistress, and that she had at least one child before she could induce the old and very stupid lord to marry her.

'But it is idle to break such a cockroach as this upon the wheel. In everything, the novel is stupid, ignorant, vulgar and contemptible; and will be forgotten before our pages appear, by that fragment of the reading public by which it was ever known.

'In the midst of all this looseness and dirt, we have great outbursts of piety, in a style of the most impassioned cant. . . .

'At all events, this book puts an end to his puppy appearance any longer in literature, as the next dissolution will put an end to his nonsensical appearance in Parliament. . . . *Berkeley Castle* in conception is the most impertinent, as in execution it is about the stupidest, it has ever been our misfortune to read.'

In an age when everyone aspired to be an author, letter-writing was extensive, and some of the accessories, such as seals and decorated notepaper are very charming; envelopes had not come into general use.

Here is part of a letter of condolence on the death of an aunt: ' . . . I am very sorry to hear Aunt Partridge is dead, but I hope she may sit on the right hand of God on that awful day. . . . '

Here is a great lady declining an invitation, as the preparations for her son's wedding have delayed her:

'The infernal lawyers cannot be ready so the infernal ceremony cannot be till Tuesday. I shall be at H—— certainly for my party, and hope you will come there as you promised.'

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This was the sort of note to send with a little present:

‘I cannot but flatter myself, my dear Lady P., that the accompanying little trifle, the work of my own hands, will give you some pleasure as a proof that you have been in my mind—this is the only recommendation I can send with it, and if I did not think you would value it on that account, I should a little hesitate to send you such a bit of trumpery. It is intended as a scent bag, and should be perfumed, but knowing the extreme delicacy of your olfactory organs and how they reject everything common or vulgar—having no elegant odours in my possession, I have left it to you to scent according to your own taste.

Your very affecte. sister,
CHARLOTTE L. P.’

Travel abroad offered splendid opportunities to the assiduous letter writer:

‘The old Roman buildings are no joke, for you cannot do one column and finish the others from it as they are all differently broken and defaced, so we have gone two days to the same sketch and have each completed two elaborate subjects in our great books.’

‘We had an excellent view of the eclipse of the moon on the 26th which I imagine you were watching in England, though perhaps there you had not the same bright cloudless night for seeing it. I am sorry to say this eclipse gave Papa a bad cold and rheumatic attack, and he is still suffering a good deal from the effects of it. We could not see it well without putting our heads out of the window so that he was continually exposed to the night air. . . .’

‘We were so placed that we could not get away with-

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out disturbing a Princess of Denmark who sat close to us, so were obliged to stay till the Mass was over, when it was past 7 o'clock—5 hrs. in Sa. Maria Maggiore! There is usually a great illumination, but this year they had an economy fit and only lighted half the usual number of candles. The church was full of poor people and country labourers who were standing or kneeling the whole 5 hrs. and appeared very devout. We had just time to get some breakfast and Papa to put on his uniform when we set off to St. Peter's to see the Pope perform High Mass at the great Altar, which is only done four days in the year. It was really a beautiful sight to see the procession of Cardinals, Bishops, etc., preceding the Pope, who was carried on a high seat borne by 12 men, with a silver canopy over him and large sort of fans of ostrich feathers on each side. The size and magnificence of the building added greatly to the effect, and a broad space was kept for the procession by troops who lined the great aisle of St. Peter's from one end to the other. The poor Pope looked fast asleep, but we were assured that it is etiquette for him to shut his eyes and appear quite unconscious of the honours done him, so that he played his part to perfection. I think this dose of Church ceremonies will be nearly enough to satisfy us, for there is no great variety in them and they are very tedious. . . .'

'We have none of us caught a fever by crossing the Pontnia Marshes, altho' we all felt exceedingly sleepy and had some difficulty in keeping awake as we crossed them. Weaklin did sleep for a considerable time in the rumble. . . .

'This is not one of the most fashionable hotels, but we chose it on account of its having the best views from the

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windows and the only Hotel from which Vesuvius can be seen at all well. . . .

‘While writing this letter I have been constantly jumping up to look at the burning Lava running down about Vesuvius. At present there is but little of it, but a considerable eruption is expected in a few days by the most experienced guides. The mountain has been in a state of commotion pretty frequently for the last few months. . . .

‘I also hope we will be able to go up Vesuvius, and that when we have seen the eruption the mountain will be peaceable enough to allow us to ascend without danger.

‘Many of the places we go to in the expedition are only accessible by sea or on donkey-back, but Mama contemplates both these modes of travelling with perfect composure.’

(To son and daughter-in-law on their honeymoon in Switzerland.) ‘I am glad you take McLelland with you to the Mountains, it would have been quite unfit that Emily should have gone without a Female.’

People who were lucky enough to know a great man got their letters franked and post free. The difficulties which confronted the ordinary letter-writer may be gathered from this broadside.

QUEEN VICTORIA AND THE UNIFORM PENNY POST

A SCENE AT WINDSOR CASTLE

Council Chamber in Windsor Castle. Her Majesty is sitting at a large table, on which are lying the Reports on Postage; copies of the Post Circular; Annual Reports of the French and American Post Offices. Her Majesty is

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in deep study over 'Post Office Reform' by Rowland Hill. Lord Melbourne, at the Queen's right hand, is watching her Majesty's countenance.

The Queen [exclaiming aloud]: Mothers pawning their clothes to pay the postage of a child's letter! Every subject studying how to evade postage, without caring for the law! Even Messrs. Baring sending letters illegally every week, to save postage: such things must not last. [*To Lord Melbourne*]: I trust, my Lord, you have commanded the attendance of the Postmaster-General and of Mr. Rowland Hill, as I directed, in order that I may hear the reasons of both about this Universal Penny Postage Plan, which appears to me likely to remove all these great evils. Moreover, I have made up my mind that the three hundred and twenty petitions presented to the House of Commons during the last session of Parliament, which pray for a fair trial of the plan, shall be at least attended to. [*A pause*] Are you, my Lord, yourself, able to say anything about this postage plan, which all the country seems talking about?

Lord Melbourne: May it please your Majesty, I have heard something about it, but—

The Queen: Heard! So, I suppose, has everyone, from the Land's End to John o' Groat's house: I wish to learn what your Lordship thinks of it?

Lord Melbourne [aside]: I really think nothing, because I know nothing. [*To the Queen*]. May it please your Majesty, the Postmaster-General tells me the plan will not do, and that, to confess the truth, is all I know about the matter.

Enter Groom of the Chamber.

Groom: The Postmaster-General and Mr. Rowland Hill await your Majesty's pleasure.

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The Queen: Give them entrance.

[*Enter Lord Lichfield and Mr. Rowland Hill, bowing.*]

The Queen: I am happy to see my noble Postmaster-General, and the ingenious author of the Universal Penny Postage Plan. Gentlemen, be seated. My Lord Melbourne has told you why I wished for your presence on this occasion. I have been reading carefully, and with great interest, the late discussions and evidence on the postage question, and I now wish to hear what is my Postmaster-General's opinion on the plan, which I therefore beg you, Mr. Hill, to describe in a few words.

Rowland Hill: With your Majesty's leave, I will say nothing of the present hardship and dearness of the Post-Office rates, or of Post-Office management itself, but confine myself, according to your Majesty's commands, to the plan you have honoured me by noticing. My plan is that all letters not weighing more than half an ounce should be charged one penny; and heavier letters one penny for each additional half-ounce, whatever may be the distance they are carried. This postage to be paid when the letter is sent, and not when received, as at present.

Lord Lichfield: Of all the wild and visionary schemes which I have heard or read of, it is the most extravagant.¹

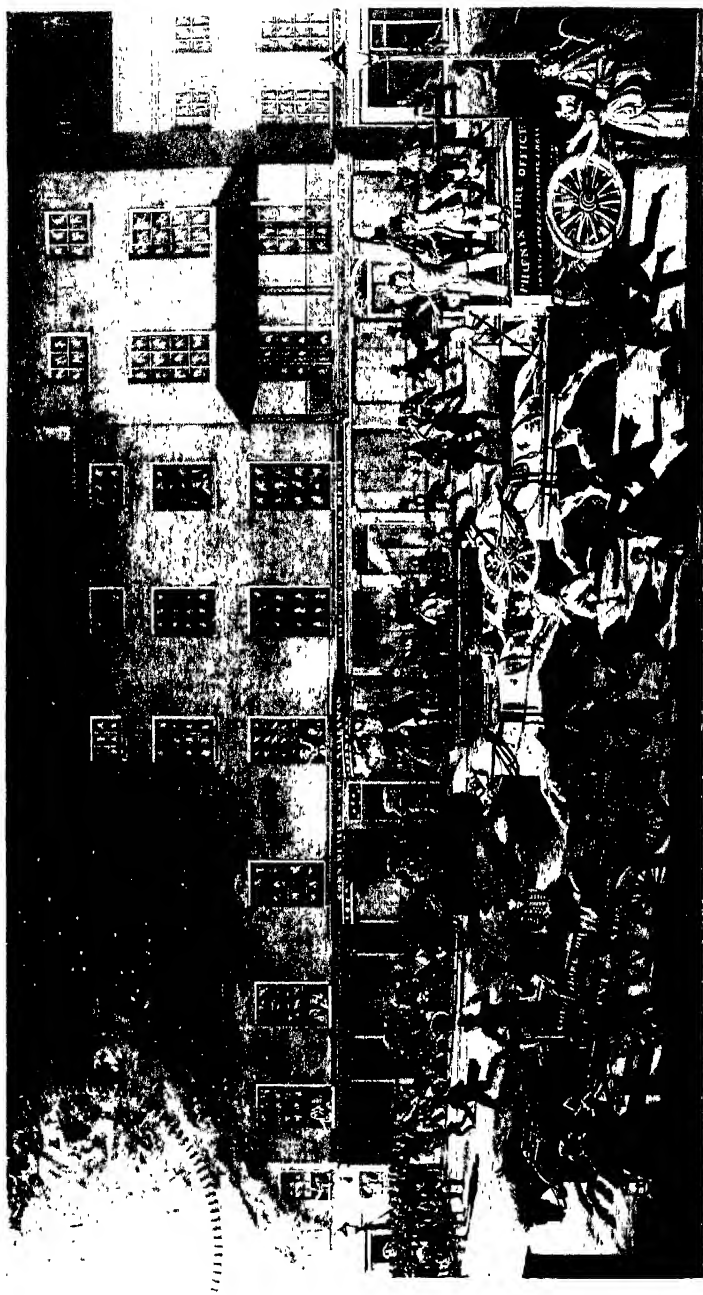
The Queen: You seem, my Lord, to adhere both to your opinions and to your very words; for the very same expressions were used a year and a half ago. Pray abstain from calling names, and use argument.

Lord Lichfield: Since I made these observations, I have given the subject considerable attention, and I remain, even still more firmly, of the same opinion.

Mirror of Parliament, 15th June, 1837.



58. Writing Materials: Envelope Cases, an Inkwell of Napoleon, a Seal with the Days of the Week, early Pens and Wafers



59. A London Fire Engine

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The Queen: I must again beg of you, my Lord, to state reasons.

Lord Lichfield: I have no objection to some reduction of postage, and I believe all previous Postmasters-General agree that some reduction is necessary.

The Queen: Why, then, have the reductions been delayed so long? Proceed, Mr. Hill, to say why you fix so low a sum as one penny.

Rowland Hill: Your Majesty will see that the cheaper the postage the easier it will be for the poor, who are nearly debarred from the use of the post at present, and all classes, to use the post. Though a penny seems very low, I beg to say that the Post Office would get at least a halfpenny profit on each letter after paying all expenses. It does not cost the Post Office a quarter of a farthing to carry a letter from London to Edinburgh, which is four hundred miles.

The Queen: I see, Mr. Hill, the Post Office admit you are correct in that estimate.

Lord Lichfield: It would be unjust to charge a letter going a hundred miles a penny, and a letter going four hundred miles only a penny. And, may it please your Majesty to remember that, though according to Mr. Hill's mode of reckoning, it does not cost us a farthing to carry letters to Edinburgh, four hundred miles, it does cost us nearly a halfpenny to carry a letter from London to Louth, which is only a hundred and forty miles.

The Queen: Indeed! How much, then, is the postage to Edinburgh and to Louth?

Lord Lichfield: To Edinburgh, 1s. 2d., to Louth, 11d.

The Queen: It appears, therefore, that you think it just to charge my people the highest price for the cheapest business. If an Edinburgh letter cost you a farthing

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to carry, and a Louth letter a halfpenny, I think in justice the Louth letter should be the dearest and not the cheapest, because all the other expenses on both sides are the same. My agreeable Prime Minister will have this looked to.

Lord Melbourne [*aside*]: My dear Lichfield; I am afraid the Queen has found you in a scrape.

The Queen: It is quite clear, from these instances alone, that postage cannot be justly charged according to distance; and I must say that as the cost of carriage is so trifling in both cases, and the differences so small, whether a letter goes one mile or five hundred miles, I think it would be fairer not to consider it at all, and then the rate on all letters would be uniform. Every letter, as you know, my Lord Lichfield, must be put into a Post Office—must be stamped, must be sorted—must be carried where directed to—and must be delivered. Postage is made up of the expenses of doing all this, and a tax beside. All the labour, except that of carriage, is the same. The carriage, being so cheap nowadays, is hardly worth regarding. Anyone can send a thousand letters packed in a parcel or bag, as they are in the Post Office, from London to Edinburgh, for 2s. 6d. by steamboat, which travels as fast as the mail. The tax should be equal on all letters, and not, as at present, the heaviest on letters going the greatest distance. The people who live at York, or at Exeter, or London, pay all other taxes equally, and so they should the postage tax. Mr. Hill, I agree with you that there should be a uniform rate; but before I assent to a penny charge I am bound not to neglect the public revenue. I am afraid that at a penny a great loss will follow. It is true the Post Office revenue is very bad at present, because it has not increased for

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these twenty years, though I am sure the numbers of my people, their knowledge and their commerce, have.

Rowland Hill: I trust your Majesty will read the evidence taken by the House of Commons respecting the revenue. Every witness says he should rejoice to engage to pay as much postage at a penny rate as he does at the present charges. I reckon that a six-fold increase of letters would yield the present amount of revenue. Many witnesses say the increase would be fifteen-fold. The present high rates cause at least three times as many letters to be sent illegally as are sent by post. No one thinks it sinful to defraud the Post Office. There are numerous smugglers in almost every town, who carry letters and charge only a penny for each letter; and if a private person can carry letters for a penny with a profit, I think a public body could do so. Moreover, there are above one thousand nine hundred penny posts all over the kingdom, which carry letters sometimes as much as thirty-eight miles and deliver them for a penny; and even these penny posts yield nearly fifty per cent., or a halfpenny profit on each letter.

The Queen: That certainly proves, Mr. Hill, that all letters, taking one with another, could be carried for a penny, with large gain. I wish to learn, however, if this great increase of letters takes place, what would be its effect on the expenses of the Post Office management.

Lord Lichfield: Effect, indeed! As your Majesty observes, the mails will have to carry twelve times as much in weight, and therefore the charge for transmission, instead of a hundred thousand pounds, as now, must be twelve times that amount. The walls of the Post Office would burst, the whole area in which the building stands

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would not be large enough to receive the clerks and the letters.¹

The Queen: Then it would appear, my Lord, that the mails already are full every night?

Lord Lichfield: Not quite, your Majesty.

The Queen: How much weight will the mails carry according to their contract?

Lord Lichfield: From eight to fifteen hundredweight.

Rowland Hill: His Lordship has given some account of the weights carried on several nights.

The Queen: I find, in the Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee, that the Leeds mail on the 20th April weighed only one hundred and fifty-eight pounds, of which the letters weighed only thirty-eight pounds, the rest being newspapers and letter bags; so that this mail might then have carried twenty-four times the weight of the letters, without overloading the mail. On the fifth of April the letters of the Stroud mail weighed less than ten pounds; so that they might be increased fifty-fold. I find that the average weight of the letters and newspapers of all the mails leaving London nightly is not three hundredweight, and that the average weight of all the letters is only seventy-four pounds; so that it is proved letters might be increased twelve-fold without increasing the expenses, instead of requiring twelve times the present number of mails, as you thought.

Lord Lichfield: Please, your Majesty, I feel very uneasy.

The Queen: Support his Lordship, my Lord Melbourne.

Lord Lichfield: With your Majesty's leave, I will retire.

[Exit Lord Lichfield.]

¹*Mirror of Parliament*, December 18th, 1837.

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The Queen [to Lord Melbourne]: It is clear to me that his Lordship had better retire from the Post Office.

Lord Melbourne: Certainly, your Majesty, we all thought him the best man to be Postmaster-General, but he has not realised the fond hopes we cherished of him.

The Queen: It appears to me, my Lord, that the loss of Colonel Moberly to the Post Office would be another great gain to the public. What I have read, and this interview, have convinced me that a uniform penny post is most advisable. I am sure it would confer a great boon to the poorer classes of my subjects, and would be the greatest benefit to religion, to morals, to general knowledge, and to trade—that uniformity, and payment in advance would greatly simplify the Post Office, and get rid of their troublesome accounts—that it would effectually put down the smuggling postman and lead my people to obey and not to disobey the law. [*The Queen rises, and in a most emphatic tone*]: My Lord Melbourne, you will please to bear in mind that the Queen agrees with her faithful Commons in recommending an uniform penny post. If your Lordship has any difficulty in finding a Minister among your party able to carry the measure into effect, I shall apply to my Lord Ashburton or my Lord Lowther, as circumstances may require. Mr. Hill, the nation will owe you a large debt of gratitude, which I am sure it will not be unwilling to repay. I wish you good morning, gentlemen.

[*Exit the Queen, Lord Melbourne and Mr. Rowland Hill bowing.*]



XIII. TOPICAL EVENTS OF THE YEAR



The death of the King had many repercussions. Such was the demand for general mourning that young dressmakers, in these days before sewing machines, worked day and night. Here is an instance subsequently given in the Government report:

‘Witness worked without going to bed, from four o’clock on Thursday morning till half past ten on Sunday morning; during this time witness did not sleep at all; of this she is certain. In order to keep awake, she stood nearly the whole of Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, only sitting down for half an hour for rest. Two other Young Persons worked at the same house for the same time.’

Cases are reported of total blindness resulting from continued application to making mourning.

The ‘Seven Bards of Seven Dials’ must also have been working overtime. Broad­sides and ballads were still sold

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in the streets, and were the main source of news to a large section of the population. The trade centred round the Seven Dials district, and the notorious rookeries of St. Giles. Much of it was in the hands of two rival firms, Catnatch and Pitts, facetiously known as the Colborn and Bentley of the broadside trade. Their speciality was the Last Dying Speech and Confession sheet, a purely fictitious account, generally in doggerel verses, of what the murderer of the moment was supposed to have said on the scaffold. Such was the simplicity of the street ballad public that the same speech, with the names altered, could be used over and over again. When sensational news ran short, they were not above concocting some scandal, often in the form of letters supposed to have been picked up. They also sold the most popular songs of the moment, generally adorned with a rough woodcut, and if any book were a phenomenal success, they put bits of it into doggerel verse. The *Song of the Pickwickians* was very popular. At Christmas they turned their hands to children's books, alphabets and the like.

The rivals were not above attacking each other. Here is Catnatch as seen by Pitts:

*All the boys and girls around,
Who go prigging rags and phials,
Know Jemmy Catsnatch!!! well,
Who lives in a back slum in the Dials,
He hangs out in Monmouth Court
And wears a pair of blue black breeches
Where all the 'Polly Cox's crew' do resort
To chop their swag for badly printed dying speeches.*

The Catnach family retorted in kind.

The death of the King and accession of Victoria called

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forth a mass of this street literature. Here are some sample verses:

*When William the Sailor beloved by us all,
Was brought to his moorings by Death
Then ensigns of Britain were struck one and all
And a nation sigh'd o'er his last breath.
But he's gone! And as Providence still to provide
For the good of Old England is seen,
An angel is sent o'er our fates to preside;
And Victoria reigns Albion's Queen.*

Another poet wrote:

*The Royal Queen of Britain's isle
Soon will make the people smile.
Her heart none can in the least defile,
Victoria Queen of England.
Although she is of early years
She is possessed of tender cares
To wipe away the orphan's tears
Now she is Queen of England.*
Chorus—*Of all the flowers in full bloom
Adorn'd with beauty and perfume
The fairest is the rose in June,
Victoria, Queen of England.*

In this year also the Greenacre and Pegsworth murders brought an ample harvest, though Mr. Hindley, the authority on Catnatch, tells us that the two coming so close together rather spoilt the public appetite. Catnatch, Pitts and the rest of the street literature printers were, of course, directly linked to the Ballad-mongers of previous centuries, and sometimes, as in *The Messenger of Mortality*, we find them reproducing some

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older verses on a theme of constant appeal, with a picture brought up to date. This was their last flicker, however, and by the middle of the century the rise of cheap newspapers had driven them from the field. Meanwhile, the Last Dying Speech man was so well known that he was included in all sketches of London characters.

The Greenacre murder of this year, made famous by the street literature sellers, was remembered for years afterwards. The details, very briefly, are that 'the trunk of a human being' was found near the Pineapple Gate (by the Edgware Road) 'in a coarse bag, and wrapped in white linen rags', and some months later, labourers, cutting osiers near Coldharbour Lane, Clerkenwell, found more remains wrapped in sacking. Greenacre was traced through the sacking, and the victim proved to be an elderly woman, Mrs. Brown, whom Greenacre, thinking she had money, had promised to marry. One night when they were drinking together, she let out that she had none, and Greenacre hit her over the head (or as he put it, pushed her chair over) so violently that she was killed. He cut up the body to dispose of it and, with extraordinary stupidity, he and his paramour, Sarah Gale, pawned the dead woman's possessions. These gruesome details caught the public fancy, the murder became the topic of the moment, and innumerable stories were circulated, such as that Greenacre had got into one of the new omnibuses with the head in a parcel, and on the conductor calling out 'Sixpence a head!' had nearly collapsed.

The execution, according to the custom of the time, was public. Here is the account from Bell's *Life in London* :

THE MORNING OF THE EXECUTION

'At 12 o'clock on Monday night there were about 1000 persons, evidently belonging to the lowest classes of the community, assembled in groups in different parts of the Old Bailey, but principally before the debtors' door of Newgate, and there was no perceptible increase to their number till about 3 o'clock, when stragglers kept arriving from different parts of the metropolis. Shortly after that hour, and just as the morning was beginning to dawn, a body of pickpockets made a rush into the public-houses and coffee-shops, which were then open, and were not expelled without considerable difficulty by the inmates. Few of the city police were then on the ground; but those who were behaved with great courage and forbearance. From this time all was bustle and confusion, and, till the crowd became too dense to admit of a free passage up and down, a sort of fair was held in the area in front of Newgate. Piemen were marching up and down the vacant space, selling "penny sandwiches" and "Greenacre tarts", to those who had stomachs to digest and money to pay for such dainties, whilst one or two itinerant ballad-mongers were hawking about pictures of Greenacre and his wretched paramour, and were seeking dupes to purchase a life and confession which they pretended he had made. At 4 o'clock the debtors' door of Newgate, before which the executions take place, was opened, and the workmen emerged from its dark mouth and commenced the erection of the scaffold.

'Shortly afterwards the platform was wheeled out of the yard of the prison to the front of the debtors' door and the sight of this instrument of punishment was hailed with three deafening cheers by the assembled

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multitude. The same terrible welcome was given at a subsequent period to the transverse beam when it was raised above the platform, and again to the Executioner when he came forward to fasten the deadly halter on the chain which is suspended from it. About 6 o'clock the crowd began to be very closely packed, and Dr. Cotton, the ordinary of the prison, had some difficulty in making his way through it to the governor's house. From that hour the additions to the crowd were constant and unremitting, and, in spite of the barriers set up in different places to break it, the pressure was frightful. In the course of the morning several females who had been forced into the centre of it fainted, and were extricated with great difficulty. The Metropolitan Police, who were stationed in small sections in the midst of the multitude, were most useful in affording assistance in these emergencies, and had it not been for their strenuous exertions, three or four women would undoubtedly have been crushed to death. At quarter before 8 o'clock the bell of St. Sepulchre's Church began to toll, and from the moment that signal of the approaching execution was heard, the screams and groans occasioned by the pressure from the two extremities of the crowd upon the centre was perfectly appalling. The multitude extended on each side as far as the range of buildings would permit the eye to reach, and there was not a window overlooking the scaffold which was not absolutely filled with spectators. At 8 o'clock the hangman and his assistant again mounted the platform, and looked at the erect beam and empty noose, and having seen that all was ready, descended as they had mounted, amid the cheers of the populace. A cry of "hats off!" was then raised, and for some minutes previous to the appearance

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of a wretched criminal every head was uncovered. It was then evident that there was a feeling in that numerous assembly which would express itself in clamorous exultation as soon as ever he appeared to atone for the blood which he had shed so unrelentingly, and no sooner did those officers, who usually precede the criminal to the place of execution, become visible, than it burst forth in a loud, deep and sullen shout of execration against Greenacre, even before that miserable man came under the terrible ordeal of their indignant glance. As soon as he had mounted the scaffold, which he did with a firm and steady step, the populace again exhibited their detestation of the bloody atrocity of which he had been convicted, by setting up a wild hurrah in approval of the retaliation which he was about to endure under the hands of justice. He placed himself at once in the hands of the executioner, as if he were disposed to "hasten over the space that divides time from eternity". This enabled the hangman to complete the preparations for his death with unprecedented rapidity. The Ordinary then read the commencing verse of the burial service, and before it was concluded the bolt was withdrawn.

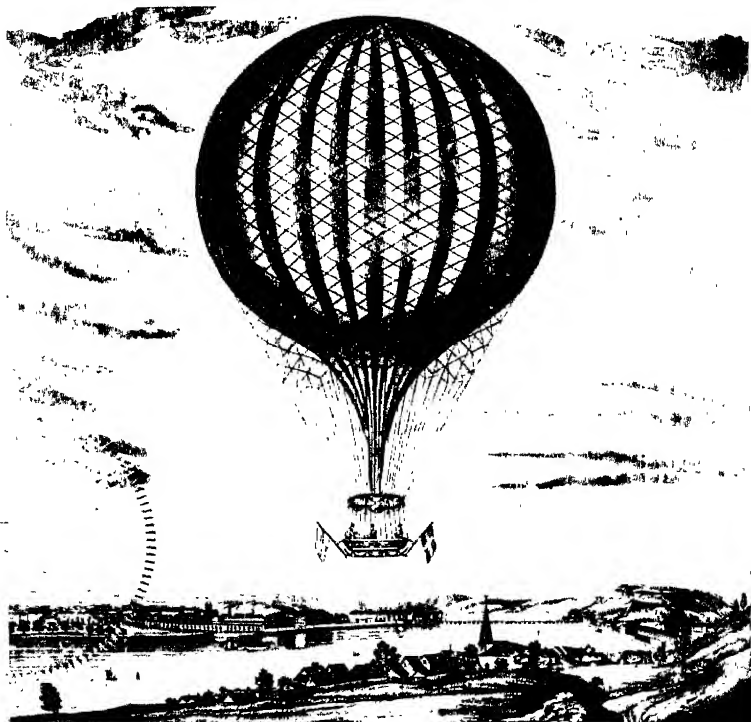
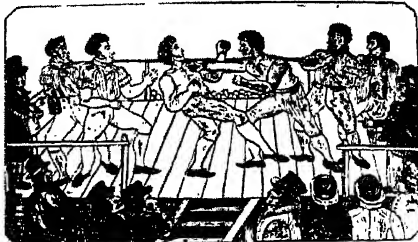
'Greenacre fell, and the vengeance of the law was accomplished. In two minutes from his first appearance on the platform he ceased to be a living man. He died, we think, instantly. One convulsive grasp of the hands was observed—nothing more; and then all but the relentless shout of the multitude was still. In a few minutes afterwards it began to disperse; but a large concourse of persons remained till 9 o'clock, when the body was cut down amidst a yell of triumph, which will live long in the memory of those who heard it.'

The prisoners inside Newgate did not see execu-



40. The Greenacre Murder. Frontispiece to a Leaflet published by
Orlando Hodgson

CHAMPIONSHIP OF ENGLAND.



41. *Above.* Part of a Λ Bill announcing a Prizefight
Below. The 'Nassau' Balloon. It left from Vauxhall
 Gardens and came down in Nassau. It is seen crossing

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tions, but capital convicts were exhibited in the condemned pew of the chapel on the previous Sunday. Gibbon Wakefield has described this edifying ceremony. When he saw it one of the condemned men was little more than a boy. The sheriffs attended in state, wearing their gold chains, with footmen in state liveries standing behind them. At this date the public was usually excluded, but if the murderer were sufficiently notorious, the sheriffs could be persuaded to set aside the rule:

‘The morning hymn is sung first, as if to remind the condemned that next morning at 8 a.m. they are to die. The service proceeds. At last the burial service is reached. The youth alone is able to read, but from long want of practice he is at a loss to find the place in his prayer-book. The ordinary observes him, looks to the sheriffs, and says aloud, “The service for the dead!” The youth’s hands tremble as they hold the book upside-down. . . .

‘All have sung *The Lamentation of a Sinner*, and have seemed to pray “especially for those now awaiting the awful execution of the law”. We come to the sermon. . . . For a while the preacher addresses himself to the congregation at large. . . . At length he pauses, and then in a deep tone, which, though hardly above a whisper, is audible to all, says, “Now for you, my poor fellow mortals, who are about to suffer the last penalty of the law. . . .” In the same solemn tone he talks about the minutest of crimes, punishments, bonds, shame, ignominy, sorrow, sufferings, wretchedness, pangs, childless parents, widows, and helpless orphans, broken and contrite hearts, and death tomorrow morning for the benefit of society. What happens? The dying men are dreadfully agitated. . . . One grasps the back of the pew, his

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legs give way, he utters a faint groan, and sinks to the floor. Why does no one stir to help him? . . .

‘The silence is short. As the Ordinary proceeds to conclude, the women set up a yell, which is mixed with a rustling noise, occasioned by the removal of those whose hysterics have ended in fainting. The sheriffs cover their faces, and one of their inquisitive friends blows his nose with his glove. The keeper tries to appear unmoved, but his eye wanders anxiously over the combustible assembly. The children round the communion table stare and gape with childish wonder. The two masses of prisoners for trial undulate and slightly murmur, while the [reprieved] capital convicts, who were lately in that black pew, appear faint with emotion.’

The crowds collected by these scenes, or any other public show, were quite beyond the control of the public authorities. Indeed, so unpopular were the new police that troops were still used in preference to them, as less likely to irritate the mob. Although, in their ordinary duties, the police were a vast improvement on the old ‘Charlies’ or street-watchmen, this is what the general public thought of them:

Necessary Qualifications for a New Policeman taking Office.

‘1. He must be utterly destitute of all feelings of humanity.

‘2. He must qualify himself for action, by knocking down every half hour, all the poor fruit-women he can find and other peaceable hard-working people, who endeavour to get an honest livelihood to support their large families, but who are too poor to keep a shop.

‘3. He must be careful never to be seen on his beat after nine o’clock in the evening, that being the

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time he is most wanted, especially in the vicinity of London.

'4. He must understand the art of ingratiating himself with all the maid servants he can find, and, after seducing them, leave their illegitimate offspring chargeable to the parish.

'5. He must also know how to bribe the domestics in every family on his beat, in order to elicit from them the sentiments of their masters, and report them to *head-quarters*; he must also be a constant *spy* on all their actions.

'6. He must possess confidence enough to insult every modest female that asks for his protection, and if she indignantly repulses him, he must then drag her off to the station-house and lock her up among a number of prostitutes till she pays a large sum for her ransom.

'7. He must get out of the way whenever his assistance is likely to be wanted, and never come till nearly half an hour has elapsed and the mischief has been done, which might by his interference have been prevented.

'8. He must be able to prevaricate upon all occasions, and swear to the truth of all questions put to him by *coroners* or others, whether he knows anything of the matter or not. *N.B.*—If able to perjure himself with a *clean conscience* he may depend upon speedy promotion.

'9. He must also be able to make himself "at home" in the kitchen of any family he may think proper to visit, after the inmates have retired to bed, having first bribed the servant to leave the outer door unlocked.

'10. If unavoidably present at a *fracàs* he must be able to discriminate between the right party and the wrong, and instantly abuse and attack the former.

'11. He must be particular to keep his white trousers

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and gloves free from spots, and if he think fit to drag to the station-house any “unwashed artificer”, he must employ an Irish labourer for the purpose, in order to preserve the “unsullied whiteness” of his own *accoutrements*.

‘12. It is indispensably necessary that he be able to break a limb, or crack a skull, at the *first* stroke of his bludgeon.

‘13. He is on no account to take charge of any ruffian who may insult a respectable person; to this end he must be able to walk the streets with his eyes shut.

‘14. He must be possessed of sufficient insolence to defy the power of the magistrates, on every occasion that may offer.

‘15. He must be as changeable as a weathercock, and may have as many different suits of clothes as there are eyes in a peacock’s tail. These he must put on as occasion serves, that he may mingle, unobserved, among the people, incite them to become traitors, and then—turn INFORMER.

‘16. And lastly. Not being under the control of any parochial authorities, he is at full liberty to insult, abuse, vilify, or knock down any respectable person who may remonstrate with him on the brutality of his conduct.

TO APPLICANTS

‘A preference will be given to stout bodied Irishmen, who can drink from two to three gallons of whisky *per day*, also to all such as have distinguished themselves by their prowess in slaughtering the French at the battle of Waterloo.

Street fights were a constant occurrence, and sometimes, it seems, the policeman himself was ready to help

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make a ring. Prize-fighting, though illegal, still continued with small attempt at concealment. A country spot would be chosen, preferably in a county where the local justices were not hostile to fights. Word would be sent round the public-houses, many of which were kept by old prize-fighters and were great centres for the laying of bets and making of matches. Tom Spring in his 'Castle' and Tom Cribb were notable ex-pugilists turned publicans, and had a hand in arranging most of the championship fights. The rival champions would each have their headquarters at some public-house, where the sporting journalists could report on their form. When the day arrived there would be a vast exodus from London, and the roads would be choked with the carriages of the patrons of the ring, the coaches would be crammed, and the roughs would follow as best they could on foot. This assembly would sometimes be met by the magistrates, and moved on to another county, so that the ring might have to be pitched in two or three different places before the fight could proceed.

Here is a description of the end of the championship fight between Caunt and Bendigo in 1838:

'Bendigo led off well with his left; but Caunt was for close work, and rushing to his man, hit right and left, and grappled, when, catching Bendigo in his arms, he carried him to the ropes, and there held him with such force as almost to deprive him of the power of motion. . . . At last fears were entertained that Bendigo would be strangled, and a cry of "Cut the ropes" burst from all directions. This suggestion was adopted, and the ropes were instantly cut in two places, when down went both, Caunt uppermost. The mob then rushed to the stakes and the most dreadful confusion followed, umpire and

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referee and all forced into a dense mass. Still the interior of the ring was preserved and cleared. . . .

‘From the 14th to the 38th round the greatest confusion prevailed. . . .

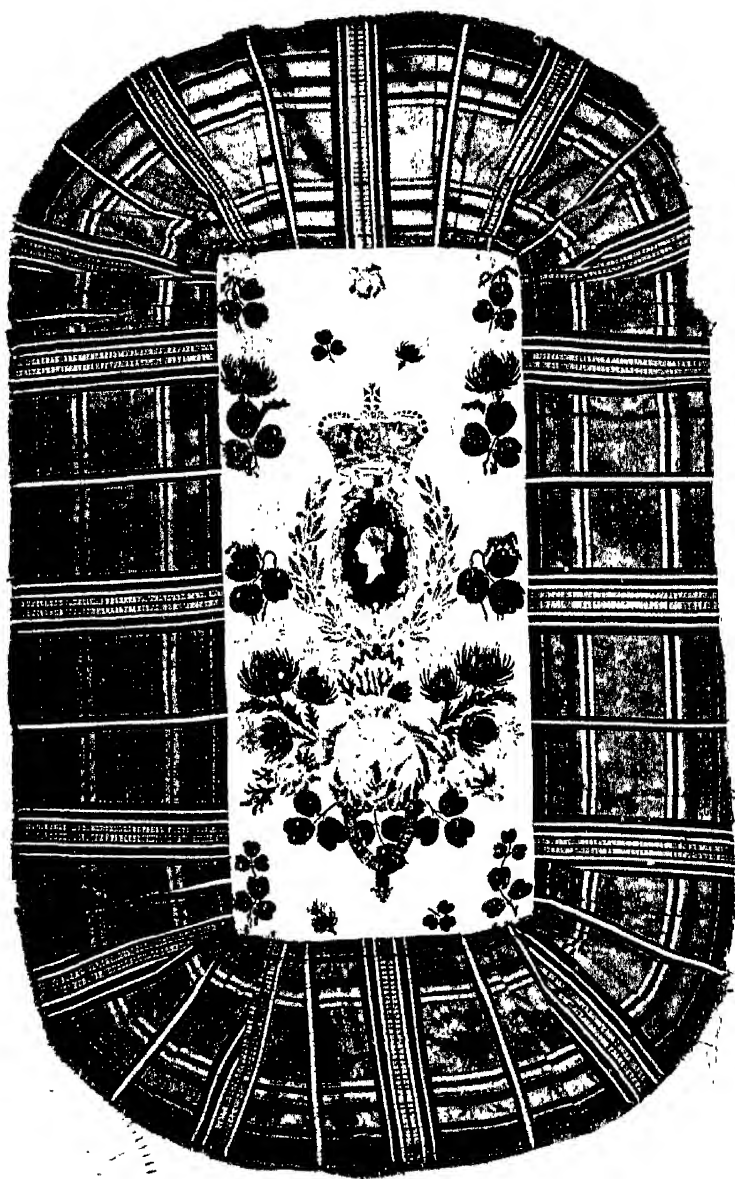
‘During this portion of the battle a magistrate made his appearance, if possible to put an end to hostilities, but he was “baying the moon”, and he was forced to retire, no doubt feeling that amidst such a scene, the dignity of his office would not be properly vindicated. About the 50th round a wrangle arose from an allegation that Bendigo had kicked Caunt as he lay on the ground. Caunt claimed the fight. An appeal was made to the referee, who declared that he saw nothing that was avoidable, and the fight proceeded up to the 75th round, during all which time the crush was overwhelming. Bendigo’s hitting was terrific, but still Caunt was game to the backbone, and although heavily punished, fought with him, and when he caught him gave him the advantage of his “Cornish hug”. Both men were alternately distressed, but the powerful hitting of Bendigo made him a decided favourite; in fact he showed but little appearance of injury, although he had received some heavy body hits, and was somewhat exhausted by Caunt’s hugging and hanging upon him; still he rallied, and was well on his legs.’

The fight was ultimately won on a foul:

‘An indescribable row followed, the friends of Bendigo declaring he had gone down from accident, owing to his substitute shoes being without spikes. Bendigo was indignant and ready to fight, but it was all U.P. Wharton would not throw a chance away, and took his man out of the ring, while Bendigo seized the colours, and in turn claimed a win.



42. Coronation Pictures from *The Fly*, a cheap weekly paper



43. Coventry Ribbon showing Queen Victoria

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'The scene that followed beggared description. Caunt, who was conveyed to his carriage, was brought out to renew the fight; but this he declined, and being placed on a horse, he was pulled off, and but for the protection of his friends, would have been roughly handled. He had to walk to Selby. . . . The fight lasted one hour and twenty minutes.'

Cockfighting, though illegal, also flourished. 'It is a painful sight', says a writer in *Fraser's*, 'to see a brace of game cocks strike their steel spurs into each other's heads, merely to gratify the disciples of the fancy. It is no less cruel to set two dogs together by the ears to decide a wager. . . .' Hoyle's *Games* gives the rules for fights and the 'Method of Treating a Cock after Fighting'. Bell's *Life in London* gives these items for this year:

'*Cocking*. The main of eleven fought at Lane End, in the Staffordshire Potteries, Bellfield and Bryan, was won by the latter, Bryan having won three cocks and three stags. . . .

'A main of cocks was fought on Easter Monday, at Spondon, for £20, between Mr. Dobson, of Spondon, Derbyshire, and Mr. T. Elliott, of Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, which was won by the former.

'A main of twenty-five, for £2 a battle, and £100 the main, will be fought in the Salford Pitt, tomorrow and Tuesday, between the gentlemen of Cheshire (Hines, feeder) and the gentlemen of Lancashire (Dandy, feeder). The cocks are spoken of as being in tip-top condition, and excellent sport is anticipated.'

Wagers were laid on every possible occasion, and the papers constantly mention freak wagers. Private gambling hells also existed all over London for the

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lower classes and the 'swell-mobsmen'; the gentlemen had their clubs. Police raids were unavailing.

The gaming sensation of the year was the attack on Lord de Ros by the *Satirist* newspaper, for cheating at cards:

'A great sensation has been created in the clubs by a circumstance which took place a short time back at *Graham's*, when Lord de Ros, such is the report, was detected in a *greek* movement that has for ever blasted his character as a gentleman, and a man of honour. We give the report as it has reached us, "extenuating nothing, nor setting down aught in malice". Lord de Ros was playing at cards with Lord George Bentinck and George Payne; after play had continued for a considerable time, Mr. Payne observed something unusual in the manner in which the suspected party dealt the pack, and which led him more closely to watch his movements. Convinced of his suspicion being well-founded, he very quietly placed his hand upon the cards, called the waiter, and had them sealed up with a view to their being delivered into the hands of the Committee. This determined proceeding on the part of Mr. Payne had such an effect upon the noble Lord that he immediately left the Club, and quitted town as soon as he could make the necessary arrangements for that purpose. His Lordship is, we believe, at present on the Continent.'

Lord de Ros threatened a libel action, to the indignation of the *Satirist*. Ultimately an action was fought at which such curious evidence was given that the plaintiff was forced to go abroad, where he died soon after.

Duelling still flourished in spite of attempts to put it down by the intervention of the police, or by ridicule. An etiquette book for gentlemen of this date gives full

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instructions on how to fight a duel politely. In 1837 a fatal duel was fought near the Spaniards on Hampstead Heath between two Polish officers. But the duel which caused most interest, though no one was hurt, was that between Lord Castlereagh and one of the husbands of Madame Grisi.

The first year of the new reign was ushered in by a tremendous fire, the burning of the Royal Exchange. 'A destructive fire has laid waste this extensive commercial building, one of the most magnificent in Europe', wrote *The Times*, heading the article 'A National Calamity'. But it certainly afforded Londoners a magnificent spectacle.





XIV. THE CORONATION



PREPARATIONS

Thursday, the 28th June, was appointed for Queen Victoria's coronation. There was, we learn from Greville, 'much foolish chatter' about the arrangements. At previous coronations there had always been a great state banquet in the Palace of Westminster; the Government decided to abandon this in favour of a state procession, to which the Opposition objected since the Government had proposed it. The Duke of Wellington cut the Gordian knot by pointing out that the Palace of Westminster had been burned down, and there could be no question of banqueting in it. At a later coronation, some of the ingredients prescribed for the oil with which the sovereign is anointed puzzled the authorities, but at this time, when two coronations had occurred comparatively recently, there seem to have been no difficulties.

Great excitement was caused by the arrival of Marshal Soult, once the Duke of Wellington's great opponent. The Duke tactfully delayed publication of that

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volume of his Dispatches dealing with the Battle of Toulouse, but the *Quarterly*, restrained by no considerations of courtesy, greeted the Marshal with an article on the battle. The Marshal was reported to have said to Lord Hill, who had always managed to out-manceuvre him in the Peninsular, 'So I have caught you up at last!' an anecdote which promptly made him a popular hero. The Marshal had brought over an historic carriage specially to ride in the Royal Procession, but the ambassadors of the smaller Courts were in a dilemma; should they squander money on extravagant coaches, or face 'the mortification of appearing in mean ones'? a difficulty only solved years later by the tact of King Edward VII. Meanwhile they had to buy or hire sheriffs' carriages and have them specially painted. One Ambassador is said to have paid £250 for a carriage for this one day only.

London was soon packed with people; 'it is as if the population had been suddenly quintupled—horsemen, footmen, carriages squeezed, jammed, intermingled, the pavement blocked up with timbers, hammering and knocking, and falling fragments stunning the ears and threatening the head; not a mob here and there, but the town all mob, thronging, bustling, gaping and gazing at everything, at anything or at nothing . . . and still the roads are covered and the railroads loaded with arriving multitudes. From the top of Piccadilly to Westminster Abbey it is one line of scaffolding; the noise, the movement, the restlessness are incessant and universal; in short it is very curious but uncommonly tiresome.'

Visitors even arrived from America. The ubiquitous Peter Parley tells his young friends: 'A Coronation, you must know, is a sight not to be seen every day in the

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United States, where we have neither King nor Queen, so thinks I to myself, I hear a great deal about the grandeur of the spectacle which is to be exhibited at the crowning of Queen Victoria, and though I have seen many grand sights in my day, I have never seen a Coronation, so I shall just get into one of the new steam ships which take one across the Atlantic Ocean so quickly, and have a look at the affair. I shall, besides, have an opportunity of seeing the kind London friends who treated me so handsomely when I was last in England, and then I shall have such lots of new stories for my young friends. I must—I shall go!

‘Peter Parley is not a man to spend much time in idling after having formed a resolution, so the very next day, having bid my old housekeeper good-bye, I arrived in New York.

‘As soon as I arrived in New York, I made enquiries about the steam ships, and, finding that the *Great Western* was to sail very soon, I secured my passage in her, and then went to visit my friends in that city, for I always like to fulfil the old adage and finish my work before I begin to play.

‘Everybody was surprised at my undertaking, and some kind folks wanted to persuade me to stay at home, thinking to frighten me by telling me about the length of the voyage, etc. They did not know Peter Parley. One wag, who wished to be very witty, asked me why I did not wait and take my passage in the new American ship, the *Horse-Alligator*, which was to sail on the 25th of June and arrive the day before! I could not help laughing at the idea, but I told him that steam was quite quick enough for me.’

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IN THE ABBEY

Coronation day dawned bright and clear. The Abbey doors were opened at five. At a quarter to seven the first peeress took her seat, to be followed by three bishops, and the building filled rapidly. 'I had never before seen the full effect of diamonds,' wrote Miss Martineau who was amongst the spectators. 'As the light travelled each peeress shone like a rainbow. The brightness, vastness and dreamy magnificence of the scene produced a strange effect of exhaustion. . . . I had carried a book and I read and ate a sandwich, leaning against my friendly pillar till I felt refreshed. . . .'

An enterprising caterer announced in *The Times*: 'William Mason, of 57 and 58, St. James Street, formerly attached to the household of his late Majesty William IV, begs to inform (those) . . . who intend being present at the Coronation of her Majesty, that he has received permission . . . to furnish refreshments in Westminster Abbey on that day, which shall be of the very best quality, and arranged on twenty-six tables placed throughout the Abbey, affording every accommodation so necessary on such an occasion. . . .'

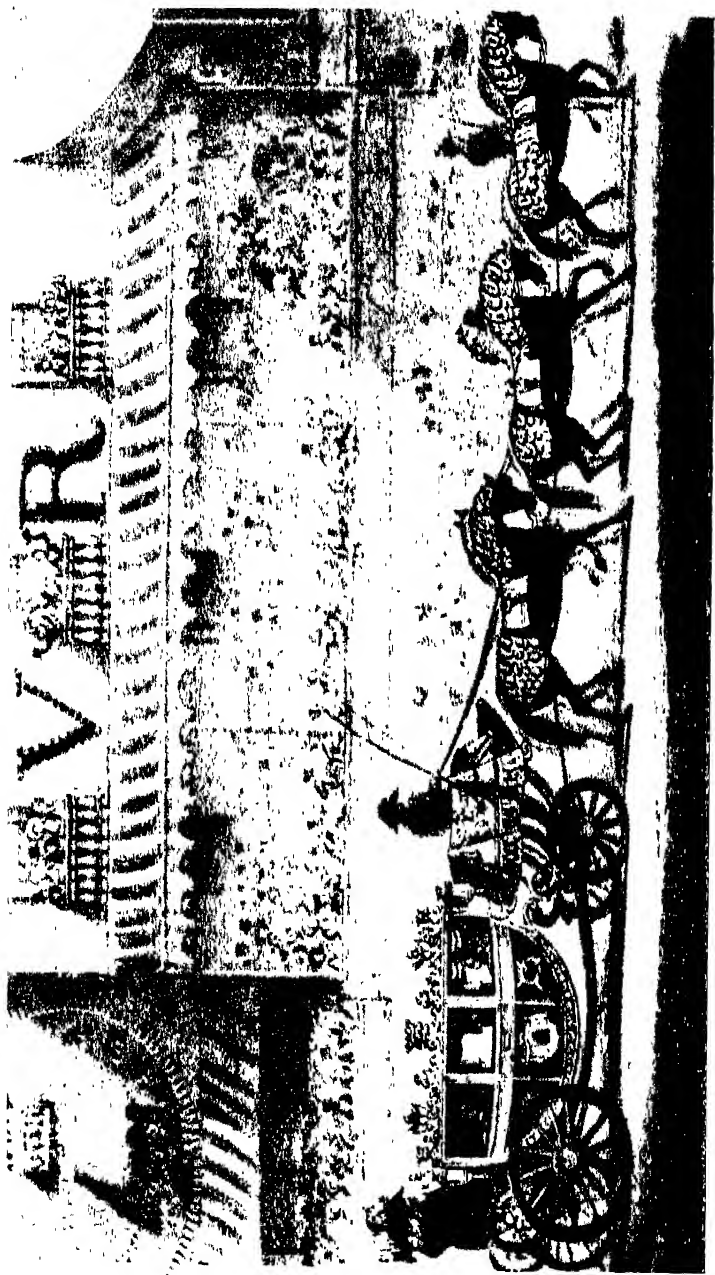
At ten the procession started. Amongst the foreign Ambassadors was Prince Esterhazy, in a Hungarian costume so covered in diamonds and jewels that 'he looked as though he had been caught in a rain of them and had come in dripping'. Marshal Soult on his appearance in the Abbey was 'saluted with a murmur of curiosity and applause'. Everyone was impressed with the appearance of the Queen; she looked such a child in the midst of all that pomp and splendour. For those who remembered the Coronations of George the

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Fourth and William the Fourth the contrast was very striking.

The 'Queen looked very diminutive,' says Greville; 'the effect of the procession itself was spoilt by being too crowded'. The actual ceremony was very badly performed, there had been no proper rehearsal. 'There was a continual difficulty and embarrassment, and the Queen never knew what she was to do next. They made her leave her chair and enter into St. Edward's Chapel before the prayers were concluded, much to the discomfiture of the Archbishop. The ruby ring was made for her little finger instead of her fourth, on which the rubric prescribes it should be put. When the Archbishop was to put it on, she extended the former but he said it must be on the latter. She said it was too small and she could not get it on . . . but, as he insisted, she yielded, but had first to take off all her other rings, and then this was forced on, but it hurt her very much, and as soon as the ceremony was over, she was obliged to bathe her finger in iced water to get it off. . . .' 'The Queen looked very well', thought Disraeli, 'and performed her part with grace and completeness,' but Lord Melbourne 'looked very awkward and uncouth . . . holding the great sword of state like a butcher'. Disraeli also mentions that 'the foreigners thought Lord Rolle's tumble was a tenure by which he held his barony'. During this part of the ceremony, the homage of the peers, which took very long, a lively scramble was going on behind the throne for the coronation medals, thrown about by the Lord Treasurer; the Maids of Honour were specially active, but the judges were too dignified to scramble and came off badly.

The Queen had started for the Abbey at ten; she did



45. Marshal Soult's Carriage at the Coronation

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not leave till twenty to five. She still looked quite fresh after the ceremony, but most of the spectators were exhausted. Miss Martineau had never been so tired in her life, and saw several ladies sitting down on the ground in six inches deep of dust. Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary, not naturally an early riser, fell fast asleep and did not wake till the actual moment of crowning, after which he dozed off again and let his coronet fall on the floor. It was said that when he felt his coronet slipping he woke with a start and cried out 'Dear me, I've lost my nightcap', but this may or may not be true.

IN THE STREETS

An old lady who, as a girl of eighteen, watched Queen Victoria's coronation procession, handed on this account of her experiences to her niece. She was invited on the eve of the great day to spend the night with friends and watch the procession pass the Marble Arch (then in front of Buckingham Palace). At nine that night she and her friends set off from her house to theirs, walking some way before they could pick up one of the few omnibuses then plying in London (trains, of course, did not exist). Next morning they got up at four to dress for the occasion. Frances, the narrator of the story, wore a white satin dress with the huge 'leg o' mutton' sleeves of the day. They set out immediately after breakfast, and found a crowd already moving towards St. James's Palace. The crowds were too dense for an omnibus to get through so they had to walk all the way, through streets full of strings of carriages and marching soldiers.

There were comparatively few people at the Palace, and on showing their tickets they were allowed to go through the courtyards, past the Chapel Royal and down

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the Mall to their seats, which were exactly opposite the Marble Arch. It was now seven o'clock. Carriages were already coming and going and amongst other gorgeous coaches they saw that of Marshal Soult, rather like the Lord Mayor's, with silver crowns at the corners, and in the middle a huge silver ring surmounted by another silver crown. In contrast to the motionless soldiers were sailors moving about on top of the Arch, preparing to hoist the Royal Standard.

At ten the procession started; carriage after carriage of grand ladies, their hair piled up on the top of their heads and their feathers set very far back, which looked extraordinary but was done to allow them to put on their coronets later. Every lady carried her coronet with her. Then the Royal Standard was hoisted, the crowd cheered and the Queen drove out. She was dressed all in white with a crimson train, her hair piled up on top of her head, so that she could wear her crown. She looked very young and very small, perched on a cushion, in the brilliant sunshine.

When the procession had passed, they left their seats, walked to the house of an uncle in Sloane Street for lunch, rested a while and walked back to their seats to see the procession return. Many of the great ladies had to meet the Queen, but the crowd was so dense, it was difficult to get through, and Frances noticed one lady in Court dress carrying her coronet and walking quietly through the mob into St. James's Palace.

At last a standard was hoisted on the Abbey to announce that the ceremony was over. Cannons fired a salute all round, till Frances felt quite faint with noise but she roused herself to see the Queen drive back crowned to the Palace. They then walked to Sloane Street.

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A tremendous crowd was thronging to Hyde Park for the Fair and some of their party, Aunt Maria, a cousin and a little brother were parted from them and swept towards the Park. There was no chance of getting back through the streaming crowd, and ultimately Aunt Maria thought of the Barracks. The sentry refused to let her through, but as she stood perplexed a gentleman drove up in a carriage and pair and offered his help. She asked if he could give her an order to go through? 'No,' he said, 'it is not in my power, and is against all rule; but if you will get into my carriage *I can take you through,*' which he not only did, but drove them home. They never discovered his name.

Later on, Frances, who must have been indefatigable, went up to Constitution Hill to see the fireworks, risking a cold as the grass was damp and her shoes very thin. As her aunt could not put her up she then walked all the way home, arriving there at four next morning.

Souvenirs of the coronation were in brisk demand. Some of them in the form of miniature books are very delightful. In one we read, 'It is truly gratifying that our beloved Queen has ascended the throne at a period distinguished for its pacific principles. Though excitement is everywhere prevalent, it is only evil conflicting with good, the result of which cannot be doubtful. Education is extending, Religion is pleasingly spreading both at home and in our colonies. Trade is rapidly recovering from its state of depression; and everything appears, under divine blessing, to promise years of national prosperity. May the Supreme Giver of all good grant that our sins may not prevent the bestowment of His mercies.'

Innumerable little anecdotes about the Queen, her

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generosity, kindness, memory for old friends and other virtues appeared in print. No account of the coronation was complete without one, whilst collections of them came out in little books for children. Here is one illustrating her piety:

‘The following statement has been given to the world by a journal which professes to be well acquainted with the proceedings in the highest classes of English life: Her Majesty is very punctual in the observance of her religious duties, and she does not fail to mark her sense of any neglect on the part of others. An interesting anecdote may be mentioned in illustration of this: A noble Lord, not particularly remarkable for his observance of holy ordinances, arrived at Windsor recently, late one Saturday night.

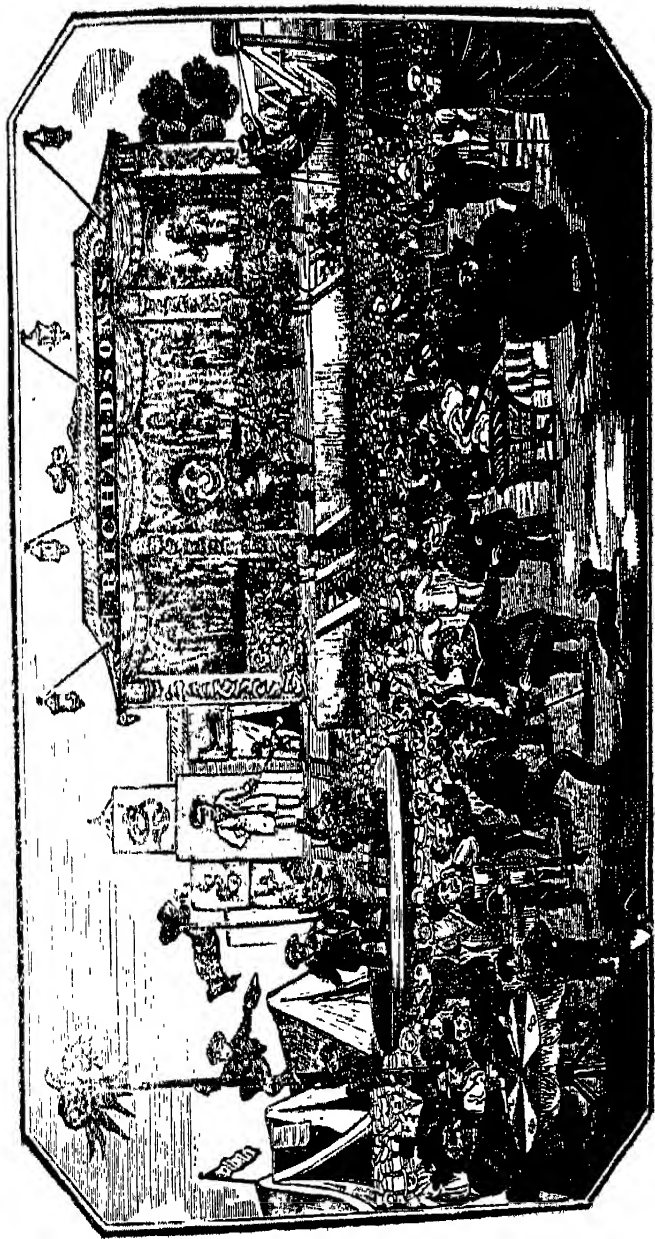
“‘I have brought down for your Majesty’s inspection”, he said, “some papers of importance, but, as they must be gone into at length, I will not trouble your Majesty with them tonight, but request your attention to them tomorrow morning.” “Tomorrow morning!” repeated the Queen; “tomorrow is Sunday, my Lord!”

““But business of state, please your Majesty.” “Must be attended to, I know,” replied the Queen, “and as, of course, you could not come down earlier tonight, I will, if those papers are of such vital importance, attend to them *after we come from Church tomorrow morning.*”

‘To church went the Royal party; to church went the noble Lord, and, much to his surprise, the sermon was on “the duties of the Sabbath”!

““How did your lordship like the sermon?” inquired the young Queen.

““Very much, your Majesty,” replied the nobleman, with the best grace he could.



46. Hyde Park Fair at the Coronation, Shows Richardson's Theatre

Messenger Of Life. and

She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she
liveth I. Tim. i, 6,

Dust thou art, and unto dust
shalt thou

RETURN.

Gen. iii, v, 19,

Vanity of Vanities shew Vanity, Ecc1.

Then shall the dust return unto
its, and the spirit unto God
who gave it Ecc1. xii. 7.

Like sleep they are laid in the grave,
death shall feed upon them; their beauty
shall consume in the Grave,
the house appointed for all living.

To be laid in the balance,
they are all together lighter than vanity.

PSALM, lxx, 16

JOB, xxx, 28,

O That they would consider
their latter end,
Deut. xxxii, 29

For what is you? (so) is it even
as a vapour, that appeareth for a
little time and then vaniseth away
James, iv, 14,

There said to corruption, thou
art my father, so the worm, thou
art my mother & sister, Job xxi, 14
Tremble ye women that are as
the grassh. xxii, 11,

of Mortality, Death Contrasted.

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk

with swollen eyes, the Lord will take away
their ornaments, and instead of sweet
smell, there shall be stink, Isa. lxi, 16

Favor is deceitful and beauty vain Prov. 31.

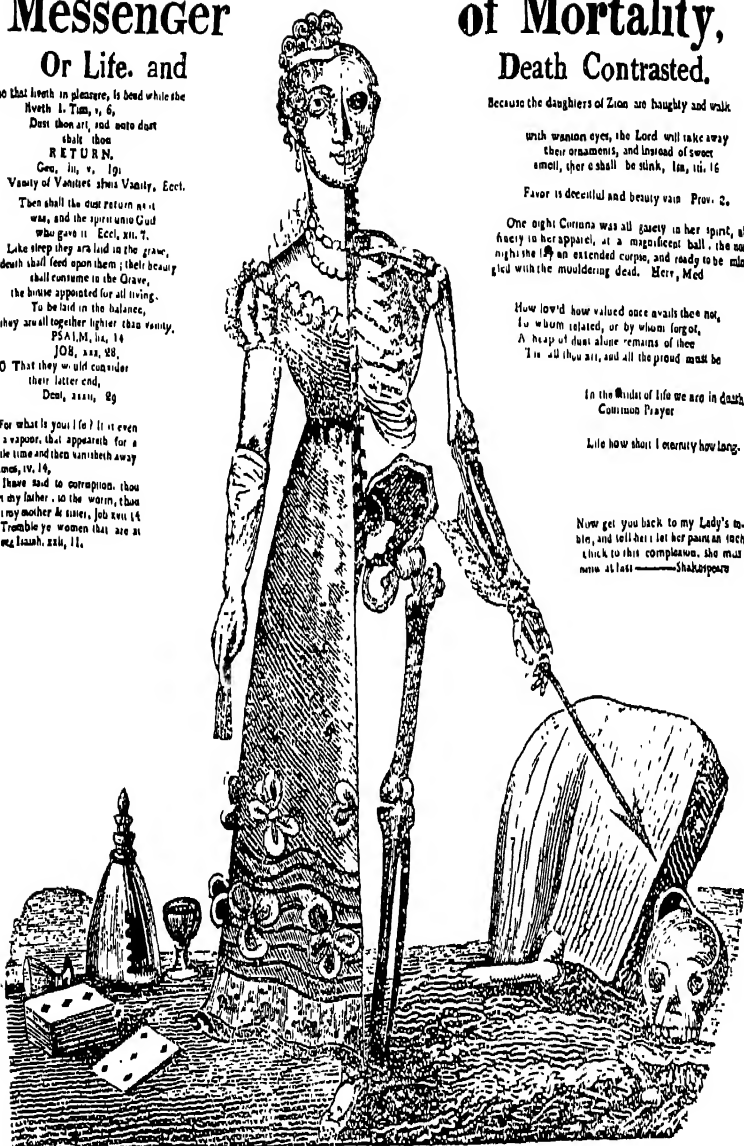
One night Corinna was all gaily in her spirit, all
finery in her apparel, at a magnificent ball, the next
night she lay an extended corpse, and ready to be moun-
tained with the mouldering dead. Her, Med

How low'd how valued once avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom forgot,
A heap of dust alone remains of thee
Tis all thou art, and all the proud must be

In the midst of life we are in death
Common Prayer

Life how short! eternity how long.

Now get you back to my Lady's to-
bin, and tell her: let her paint an inch
thick to this complexion, she must
nowe stave ——— Shakespeare



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“I will not conceal from you”, said the Queen, “that last night I sent the clergyman the text from which he preached. I hope we shall all be the better for it.”

“The day passed without a single word “on the subject of the papers of importance”, and at night when her Majesty was about to withdraw, “Tomorrow morning, my Lord,” she said, “at any hour you please, as early as seven, if you like, we will go into these papers.” His lordship could not think of intruding at so early an hour on her Majesty—“Nine would be quite time enough.” “As they were of importance,” said the Queen, “my Lord, I would have attended to them earlier, but at nine be it.” And at nine her Majesty was seated, ready to receive the nobleman, who had been taught a lesson on the duties of the Sabbath, it is to be hoped he will not forget quickly.’

FESTIVITIES

In the evening London was illuminated, in places by gas but mostly with oil lamps. The effect is said to have been dazzling.

Many of the theatres were opened free; or rather at the expense of the Government. They included Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Haymarket, Lyceum, Adelphi, Strand, Astley’s, Surrey, Victoria, City of London, Sadler’s Wells, Eagle Tavern (Grecian), White Conduit House, Bagnigge Wells, Garrick, Standard and Pavilion.

The Duke of Wellington gave a grand Apsley House Ball. All through the country there were public dinners of roast beef for the poor; in old account books may often be found the entry: ‘To Coronation Dinner for Poor—£5.’ The whole country was lit up with bonfires and fireworks.

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In London the greatest popular draw was the Hyde Park Fair. Disraeli maliciously said that it was kept on extra long to save the face of the authorities, who had not enough troops to get up a review for Soult, and therefore pretended there was no vacant space. Be that as it may, the Fair was a vast attraction. 'Lord' George Sanger, the famous circus proprietor, was there with his parents, and has left an account of how the showmen saw it:

'As, of course, my readers are well aware, the coronation of Queen Victoria did not take place till a year after her accession, and this enabled the planning of a great many unusual festivities to mark the wonderful June that witnessed the happy and epoch-making event. Amongst others who planned were her Majesty's loyal showmen, who debated all sorts of schemes during their winter rest, and eventually decided that if leave could be obtained a fair in Hyde Park would prove not the least of London's attractions during the festive month.

'Nelson Lee and John Johnson, the then proprietors of the original and famous Richardson's show and the City of London Theatre in Shoreditch; Mr. L. Watkins Williams, a Liveryman of the City, who had a noted restaurant in the Old Bailey and an interest in one of the big menageries; and Mr. Samuel Algar, a "Wine and Porter Merchant", as the style went in those times, of the Mile End Road, took the matter in hand; the Queen was petitioned, and graciously gave permission for the holding of the fair.

'The latter, the like of which has never since been seen, lasted for nine days, the original grant of a week having been kindly extended by her Majesty, and

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attracted all the great exhibitions in the country with a whole army of minor showmen.

'Richardson's Theatre was there with all the best actors of the day performing Shakespearean dramas. Wombwell and Hilton rivalled each other with their menageries; circuses, waxwork, marionette and other shows, the biggest of their kind, bearing such famous names in the fair-going world as Scoughton, Baker, Smith, Webster, Atkinson, etc., took up wide spaces in the vast park. Between them were sandwiched the smaller affairs, such as our peep-show and roundabout, and the freak and curiosity booths with amazing canvases depicting the wonders to be seen within.

'I can see those curiosities in my mind's eye now, and a queer collection they were. Giantesses, for instance, were well represented by the Misses Cockayne, described as the American twin sisters. They were fine, tall girls, but as one had one mother and the other another, and their birthplace was Whitechapel, their description as "twins" and "American" was just a bit of harmless showman's licence.

'Then there were numerous fat men and women, spotted boys, natural and unnatural, fair Circassians, the Hottentot Venus, dwarfs, Miss Scott, the two-headed lady, Yorkshire Jack, the Living Skeleton, and learned pigs and fortune-telling ponies galore.

'At this fair too there was exhibited almost for the last time a freak that had puzzled and amazed the public for a considerable period. This was Madame Stevens, "the Pig-faced Lady", concerning whom I have one of my promised exposures to make.

'Madame Stevens was really a fine brown bear, the paws and face of which were kept closely shaved, the

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white skin under the fur having a close resemblance to that of a human being. Over the paws were fitted white gloves, with well-stuffed fingers, so that the pig-faced lady seemed to have nice plump white arms above them.

‘The bear was strapped in a chair at the back of the caravan, clothed in female dress, shawl, cap, the poke bonnet of the time, etc. In front was a table at which the seeming lady sat, her paws being laid upon it, and all the rest of the body from the arms of the chair downwards hidden by drapery. Under the table was concealed a boy with a short stick to make the pig-faced lady talk.

‘When all was ready, and the booth full of spectators, the showman would commence his patter thus, as he pulled aside the curtains:

‘“I call your attention, ladies and gentlemen, to the greatest wonder of the world! Behold and marvel! Madame Stevens, the pig-faced lady, who is now in her eighteenth year. I believe this is correct, miss?” (Here the hidden boy would prod the bear, who gave a grunt.) “As you see, ladies and gentlemen, the young lady understands what is said perfectly, though the peculiar formation of her jaws has deprived her of the power of uttering human speech in return. You were born at Preston in Lancashire?” (Another prod and another grunt.) “Quite so. And you enjoy good health and are very happy?” (Another prod and grunt.) “You are inclined, I suppose, as other ladies, to be led by some gentleman into the holy bonds of matrimony?” (Here the boy would give an extra prod, causing the bear to grunt angrily.) “What, no! Well, don’t be cross because I asked you!”

‘This would be sure to raise a laugh and expressions of

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wonder. Then a plate would be passed round to receive contributions, "to buy the lady small comforts and luxuries", as the showman said. After this he would conclude as follows:

"Now, Miss Stevens, you will return thanks to the ladies and gentlemen for coming to see you!" The boy would use his stick, and the bear would growl loudly. The doors of the caravan were then thrown open, and as the sightseers poured out the showman would rush to the front, shouting, "Hear what they say! Hear what they all say about Madame Stevens, the wonderful pig-faced lady!"

"This show and some others of its class were stopped by the authorities at the following Camberwell fair, and the pig-faced lady became only a memory, lots of people to their dying day believing that such a person really existed.

'At Hyde Park I wanted to launch out for myself and to do a few acrobatic tricks, so father allowed me to engage myself to Malabar, the juggler and ball-tosser, to patter outside his show and take part in the performance for four shillings a day.

'Malabar, who called himself an American, but who was really an Irishman, was a splendidly built man, standing six feet four inches high, and very clever in his business. One of his great feats was to balance a small donkey strapped to the side of a sixteen-rung ladder, using in connection with the performance the well-known phrase, "Tuppence more and up goes the donkey!"

'That came about in this way. After the juggling tricks with the knives, bottles and balls, Malabar would bring out the ladder and the donkey, put a tin plate in

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the centre of the small arena, and address the audience as follows:

“If you wish to see the remaining and most remarkable part of the exhibition, I leave it to your generosity to contribute a little more. There is the plate, ladies and gentlemen; don’t be afraid of throwing in your money, I shall not be afraid of picking it up!” In response, coppers would be sure to come rolling in. Then, looking at the plate, Malabar would say, “Ah, I see there is so much. If you will make it up to level money, up goes the donkey. Tuppence more, ladies and gentlemen; only tuppence more, and up goes the donkey!” The coppers would be forthcoming, the donkey balanced in the air, and then the show was cleared for another audience.

‘On the second morning of the fair, it was found that somebody had stolen Malabar’s donkey. All efforts to recover the animal proved vain, and, so that the show might be kept on, and to avoid grumbling, it was arranged that I should take the donkey’s place. I did so successfully once or twice, and was duly balanced in mid-air, at the top of the ladder, on the chin, forehead, shoulder and arm of the juggler.

‘But Malabar was given to drink, and business being brisk and coin abundant, he one day indulged too freely in beer. I did not notice his condition till after my own little performance, and I had started to ascend the balanced ladder. When I did perceive what had happened, my nerves gave way just as I was clutching the sixteenth rung. Malabar lost the balance, and down I came, ladder and all, upon the heads of the spectators. The show was broken up for the night, and, in fact, altogether. Malabar drank enormously, and did not show again while the fair lasted. Worst of all, I never

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got the pay I had bargained for, and all my labour, my little tricks, my patter outside, and the risk of my neck inside the booth went unrewarded.

‘So I went back to father, and for the remainder of the fair assisted in the management of the peep-show. We did splendid business, and had more money in hand than we had managed to get for many a long day when the great fair broke up, and we went on the road again.’



The Pig-Faced Lady

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